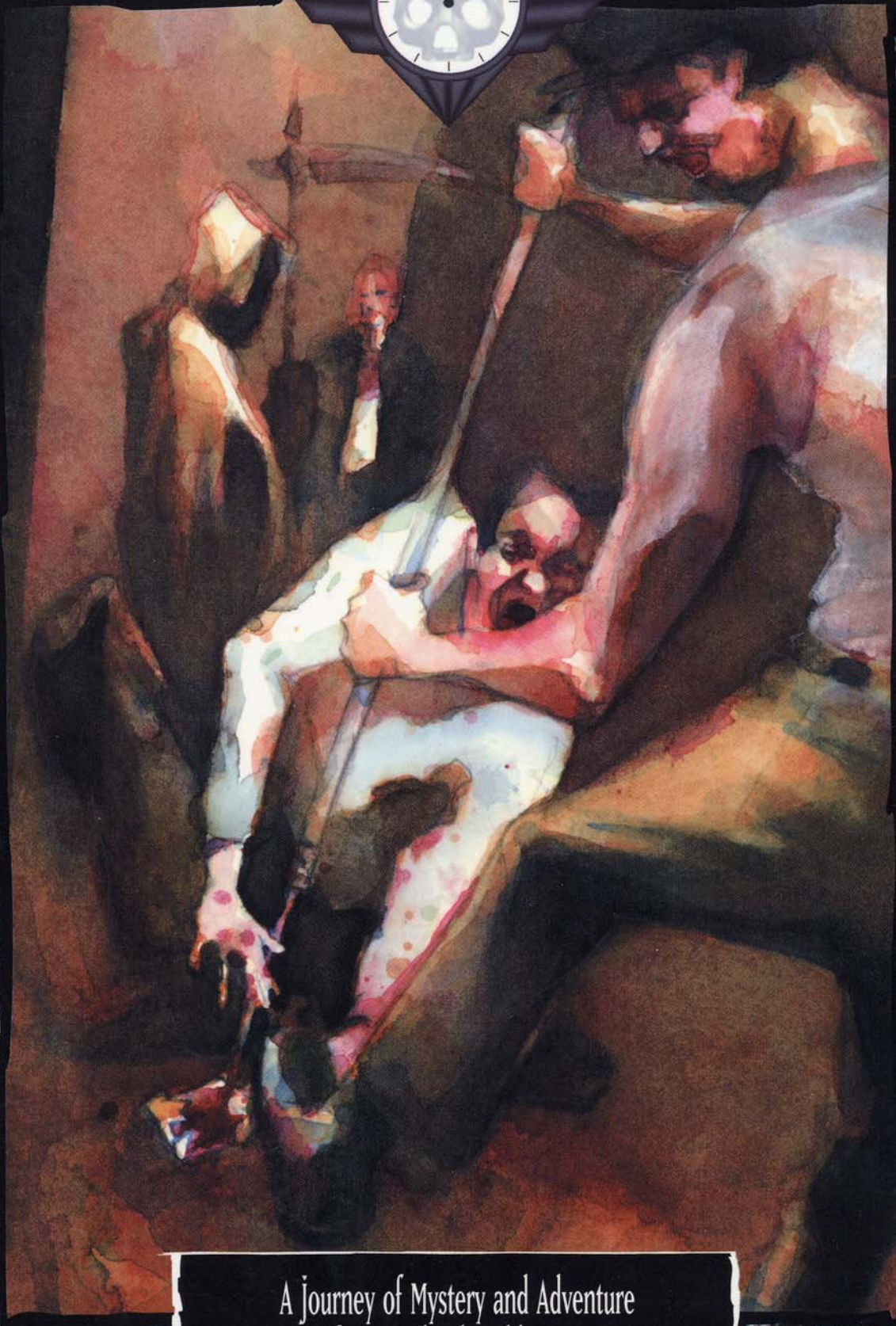


MIDNIGHT EXPRESS



A Journey of Mystery and Adventure
for Wraith: The Oblivion™



MIDNIGHT EXPRESS



by Brian Campbell, Beth Fische, Chris Hind, Ian Lemke and Allen Tower







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Mike "Oh Captain, My Captain" Krause, for getting things back on an even keel.

Wes "Eurotrash Girl" Harris, for being our angel in black.



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MIDNIGHT EXPRESS

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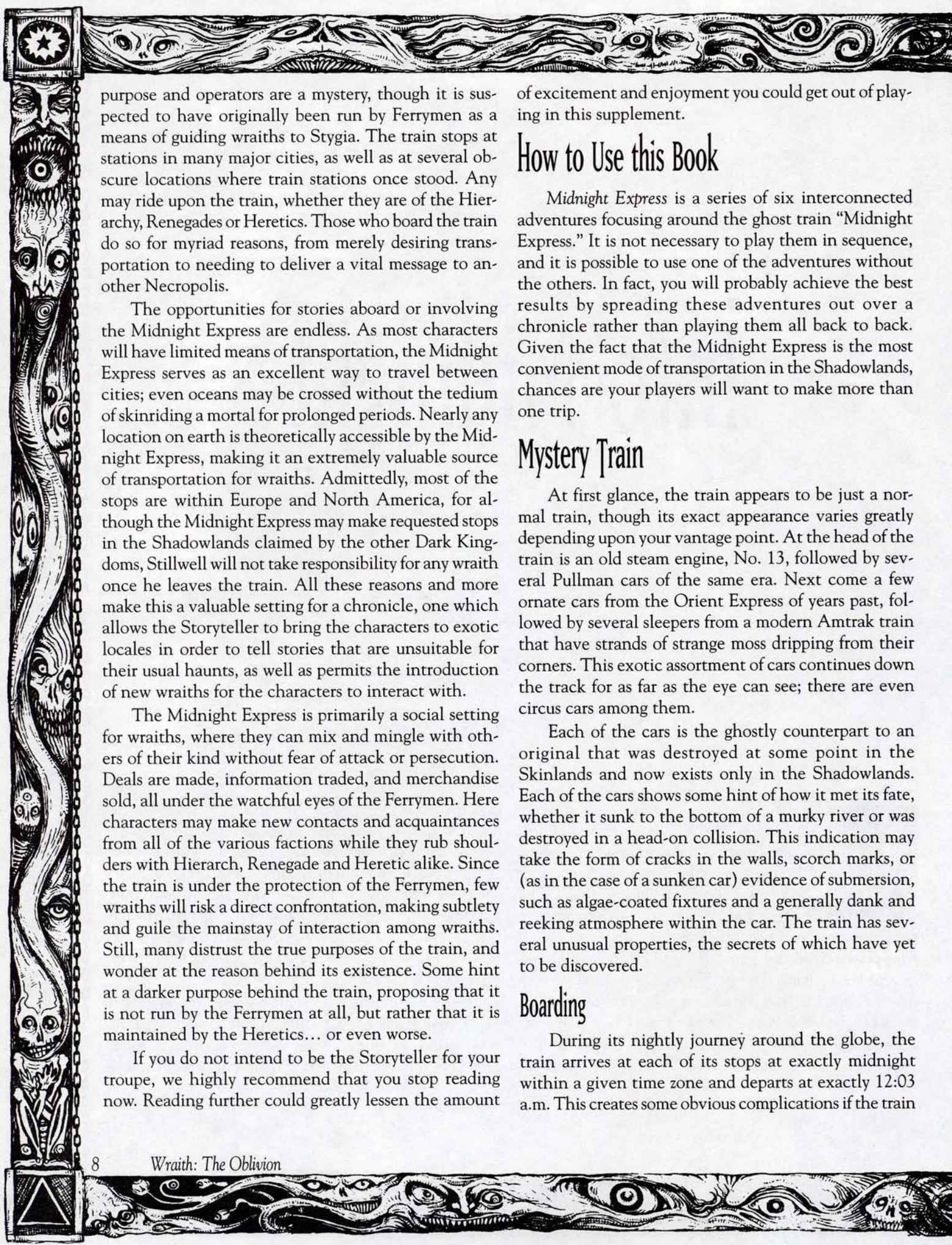
Into Midnight



he chill air whips through the station, howling like a banshee from hell. A crumpled piece of paper blows by, catches for a moment in one of the tracks, then continues on its random course. Looking about the platform, you see torn and faded posters of past political campaigns peeling off crumbling pillars. Soon, the sound of the train whistle is heard, its eerie howl echoing through the streets of the city. Peering into the darkness, you can at first only make out a small speck of light, which begins to grow rapidly larger. The train approaches, and you can feel the ground rumble as the whistle reaches a near-deafening pitch. The screeching of the brakes

joins in, causing those nearby to cover their ears as the engine, followed by many cars, goes rushing past, finally slowing to a halt. Then, after a violent hiss of steam, all is silent. A quick glance at the train reveals that this is no ordinary passenger train; cars from many different eras and countries line the tracks. The doors to one of the cars silently open, revealing the conductor, silhouetted by the dark interior. He extends his hand, motioning for you to board the train. Welcome aboard the Midnight Express!

Each night, the Midnight Express traverses the globe, making its dangerous journey through the Tempest, following midnight from stop to stop. The exact origins of the Midnight Express are unknown; even its



purpose and operators are a mystery, though it is suspected to have originally been run by Ferrymen as a means of guiding wraiths to Stygia. The train stops at stations in many major cities, as well as at several obscure locations where train stations once stood. Any may ride upon the train, whether they are of the Hierarchy, Renegades or Heretics. Those who board the train do so for myriad reasons, from merely desiring transportation to needing to deliver a vital message to another Necropolis.

The opportunities for stories aboard or involving the Midnight Express are endless. As most characters will have limited means of transportation, the Midnight Express serves as an excellent way to travel between cities; even oceans may be crossed without the tedium of skinriding a mortal for prolonged periods. Nearly any location on earth is theoretically accessible by the Midnight Express, making it an extremely valuable source of transportation for wraiths. Admittedly, most of the stops are within Europe and North America, for although the Midnight Express may make requested stops in the Shadowlands claimed by the other Dark Kingdoms, Stillwell will not take responsibility for any wraith once he leaves the train. All these reasons and more make this a valuable setting for a chronicle, one which allows the Storyteller to bring the characters to exotic locales in order to tell stories that are unsuitable for their usual haunts, as well as permits the introduction of new wraiths for the characters to interact with.

The Midnight Express is primarily a social setting for wraiths, where they can mix and mingle with others of their kind without fear of attack or persecution. Deals are made, information traded, and merchandise sold, all under the watchful eyes of the Ferrymen. Here characters may make new contacts and acquaintances from all of the various factions while they rub shoulders with Hierarchy, Renegade and Heretic alike. Since the train is under the protection of the Ferrymen, few wraiths will risk a direct confrontation, making subtlety and guile the mainstay of interaction among wraiths. Still, many distrust the true purposes of the train, and wonder at the reason behind its existence. Some hint at a darker purpose behind the train, proposing that it is not run by the Ferrymen at all, but rather that it is maintained by the Heretics... or even worse.

If you do not intend to be the Storyteller for your troupe, we highly recommend that you stop reading now. Reading further could greatly lessen the amount

of excitement and enjoyment you could get out of playing in this supplement.

How to Use this Book

Midnight Express is a series of six interconnected adventures focusing around the ghost train "Midnight Express." It is not necessary to play them in sequence, and it is possible to use one of the adventures without the others. In fact, you will probably achieve the best results by spreading these adventures out over a chronicle rather than playing them all back to back. Given the fact that the Midnight Express is the most convenient mode of transportation in the Shadowlands, chances are your players will want to make more than one trip.

Mystery Train

At first glance, the train appears to be just a normal train, though its exact appearance varies greatly depending upon your vantage point. At the head of the train is an old steam engine, No. 13, followed by several Pullman cars of the same era. Next come a few ornate cars from the Orient Express of years past, followed by several sleepers from a modern Amtrak train that have strands of strange moss dripping from their corners. This exotic assortment of cars continues down the track for as far as the eye can see; there are even circus cars among them.

Each of the cars is the ghostly counterpart to an original that was destroyed at some point in the Skinlands and now exists only in the Shadowlands. Each of the cars shows some hint of how it met its fate, whether it sunk to the bottom of a murky river or was destroyed in a head-on collision. This indication may take the form of cracks in the walls, scorch marks, or (as in the case of a sunken car) evidence of submersion, such as algae-coated fixtures and a generally dank and reeking atmosphere within the car. The train has several unusual properties, the secrets of which have yet to be discovered.

Boarding


During its nightly journey around the globe, the train arrives at each of its stops at exactly midnight within a given time zone and departs at exactly 12:03 a.m. This creates some obvious complications if the train



has more than one stop within a given time zone, yet somehow the operators manage to work around these difficulties in a manner that still has Artificers befuddled. At each of the stops only one car is accessible for boarding and disembarking. The rest of the cars, though visible, simply do not exist for those wraiths boarding. During this period that the train is present within the Shadowlands, passage between cars is impossible, though this is hardly an inconvenience, as it only lasts three minutes. During the train's stop, the guards ensure that all who wish to board the train may. Therefore, any who can make it to the platform by midnight can usually make it onto the train. The Hierarchy will not risk the wrath of the Ferrymen by interfering with boarders once they have reached the platform, though this certainly does not discourage them from attempting to stop individuals from ever reaching the platform. J.W. Stillwell, the conductor, greets each of the passengers only after everyone has boarded and the train is under way once again. During his rounds, he inquires as to each new passenger's destination and directs her to the proper car for disembarking. He will also accept requests for stops at this time. He will usually acquiesce to requested stops, as long as there is, or was at one time, a train station at the desired location. It is customary for those requesting a special stop to offer some sort of payment, usually two quarter oboli. Unless a passenger wishes for special arrangements to be made (sleeping compartments, refreshments, first-class or a stop request), travel on the Midnight Express is free.

Through the Tempest

It is known that the train travels to each of its destinations through the Tempest along well-established Byways, known only to those who run the train. While in transit, those within the train are resistant to the usual adverse effects of the Tempest; in fact, the train is immune to all but the most powerful Maelstroms, and even these usually do little more than create a bumpy ride for the passengers. There have been some reports of individuals being attacked by Spectres while traveling between cars, but these incidents are extremely rare. While in transit, wraiths may travel freely between cars, though when disembarking, it is best for a wraith to be in the car corresponding to her destination, because the doors in all cars do not necessarily open at each stop.



Unlike modern trains, there isn't necessarily an enclosed walkway between cars. This is because the Midnight Express is composed of many cars from different periods. Some cars are connected in this manner, but they are the exception rather than the rule. If characters choose to travel between cars, describe the feelings of fear and dread that traveling unprotected through the Tempest, even momentarily, causes in them. The darkness presses in from all sides. A hot, fetid wind rustles through their hair and clothing. At the limits of their perceptions they can hear distant sounds, almost-discernible screams and moans. Make it as eerie as possible. If the players breathe an audible sigh of relief when their characters enter the next car, congratulate yourself.

Particularly brave or foolhardy wraiths have been known to disembark from the train while it was in transit in the Tempest. Leaping from the train thrusts the wraith right into the midst of the Tempest, exposing her to the full brunt of its ferocity. Any character who attempts such a feat is immediately subjected to ten dice of non-aggravated damage, though this damage may be soaked as usual. The character is then open to the usual effects of the Tempest. A wraith would have to possess Argos in order to locate another wraith who had leapt from the train, unless they had jumped from the train simultaneously.

Way Station

During its run, the Midnight Express does make one stop that is not in the Shadowlands; this brief stop is in the Tempest. While traversing the Pacific Ocean, the train makes a short detour to the way station there. This station stands fast against the constant bombardment of Maelstroms that scour the Tempest, and even endures the onslaught of the Spectres who continually assault it. This stage of the journey is considered to be the most dangerous and is avoided by many wraiths who know of it.

This purpose of this brief stop at the way station is to transfer goods and individuals bound for Stygia. From the way station, there is another train that travels directly to Stygia. This method of transport is often used by wraithlords who wish to transport large amounts of goods to or from Stygia. For decades this stop was kept secret from others, but has come to be more and more public knowledge in the last few years. Many feel that

it is only a matter of time before an ambitious group of Spectres, or even other wraiths, successfully hijack the train from this point.

The station resembles a small train station from the early 1920s, complete with a ticket counter and ticket seller. Other than this one individual, the station is noticeably empty. Anyone disembarking from the train is immediately struck by the fact that the station is adrift in the Tempest. From the boarding platform, the train stretches down the tracks into the swirling mists that engulf it. In order to load or unload cargo, McClintlock positions the proper car by the station, so that it is accessible. While on the platform, wraiths are still vulnerable to attacks from Spectres or anything else that may emerge from the Tempest. Guards are usually stationed on the platform during loading and unloading to watch for any approaching danger. The interior of the station is as safe as any Citadel, for it was built to withstand the most powerful Maelstrom and is maintained by the Ferrymen. Additionally, the Hierarchy maintains a presence here to safeguard shipments to and from Stygia. From here, transportation may be arranged to Stygia, though few wraiths can survive there for any prolonged period of time. The price of such transport is usually quite high.


Opinions of Others

Each group of wraiths, as well as each individual wraith, has their own opinion and theories concerning the Midnight Express.

• Hierarchy

The Hierarchy are publicly the most opposed to the train. They see the Midnight Express as a danger to their plans and certainly one of the worst security leaks imaginable; by train a wraith can gain access to any Hierarchy Citadel in the Shadowlands, not to mention Stygia itself. The Deathlords consider this intolerable and will do anything they can to see the train thwarted. Of course, extreme care must be taken when planning to oppose those as powerful as the Ferrymen, and to date the Hierarchy have taken no direct action against the train.

That, at least, is the official doctrine. There are those within the Hierarchy who make use of the Midnight Express on a daily basis. The Hierarchy have their own trains running back and forth to Stygia, and even those that traverse the Shadowlands. However, any



goods to be shipped aboard such trains must be carefully cataloged, and bribes to ship such things as weapons or the like can be quite expensive. In addition, these trains are extremely vulnerable to Spectre attacks, and it is possible to lose entire shipments. Meanwhile, the Midnight Express has a perfect record as far as performance is concerned: It is never late and has yet to be successfully hijacked. Also, Nicholas generally does not request a registry of goods shipped, and his prices are relatively cheap. It is for this reason that the way station in the Pacific was established, to maintain a Hierarchy-controlled point to transfer cargo to and from Stygia. So if one wants goods shipped to Stygia, or elsewhere in the Shadowlands quickly, quietly and cheaply, the Midnight Express is the way to do it.

The Midnight Express also makes an excellent neutral location for clandestine meetings. Even the most loyal Hierarchy member occasionally must conduct business that may be considered treasonous by others. Any may board the Midnight Express and mingle freely with others, making it an excellent place to meet with members of other factions. Not to mention that the Orient Express dining car is one of the few places in the nether realms that one can obtain real food.

• Heretics

The Heretics see the Midnight Express as an extremely valuable resource and source of new recruits. Heretic scouts continually scour the train, seeking potential converts among its passengers, as well as attempting to learn what they can of the plans of the Hierarchy by spying on those members they meet on board.

Something of a war has recently broken out among the Heretic cults on board. Several dark cults have sprung up among those who worship Oblivion and believe that Transcendence can only be gained through embracing Oblivion. Most believe that this group is headed by a powerful Malfean, though no one understands why the Ferrymen permit them on board. Several of the other cults have united behind a common purpose of scourging these Oblivion cults from the train, as well as from existence if possible. They travel the trains, seeking out members of this cult so that they can be eliminated. Spectators debate whether the conflict will grow large enough for the Ferrymen to intervene before the groups degenerate into fighting among themselves.

• Renegades

For the Renegades, the Midnight Express is the ultimate opportunity because the train allows them access to every city and Hierarchy stronghold in the world. Although, like the Hierarchy, the Renegades have their own trains and other similar means of transportation, none are as safe or as reliable as the Midnight Express. Also, Renegade resources tend to be very limited, as their groups tend to be very fractious, and what they do have is constantly being destroyed by Hierarchy enforcers. The Midnight Express allows them to ship large numbers of wraiths and relics to anywhere they desire, no questions asked.

In addition to providing a means of transportation, the train offers an excellent recruiting ground. Wraiths of many varieties travel aboard the train for many different reasons. This gives the Renegades ample opportunity to feel out a great number of wraiths in order to determine if they would be sympathetic to their cause. The Renegades even have a permanent plant on board the train, who keeps an open eye and ear for potential recruits. Those deemed to be potentially sympathetic to the Renegade movement are then approached by a recruiter in order to feel them out.

• Freelancers

Wraiths who claim no allegiances to any particular faction are generally welcome anywhere, and the Midnight Express is no exception. Freelancers see the train as a ripe opportunity for employment. Many ride the train frequently, getting off only briefly at each stop to look for jobs. Work is usually readily available to those seeking it, whether it involves guarding cargo or simply delivering a message to a contact in another city. These wraiths will often throw themselves into the fray if the train is attacked or attempt break up any fight that erupts, in the hopes of receiving payment afterwards.

History of the Midnight Express

Not long after trains started to run regularly, train relics began to appear in the Shadowlands. Train wrecks were quite common in those early days, and often left the trains utterly destroyed. Until that time, the Ferrymen had to rely upon the Byways and rivers to ship the dead onward. With the numbers of their dead arriving in the Shadowlands increasing daily, it became

obvious that new means of transportation were needed. A council of Ferrymen, lead by one who called himself Nicholas, decided to create a train of their own. This train would circle the Earth every night and take on any who desired to board. The Ferrymen made arrangements to transfer any who wished for passage to Stygia onward, and made it known that any who boarded the train seeking Transcendence might obtain guidance. The word was spread among the wraiths of the Shadowlands and of Stygia, and the Midnight Express came into being.

The Ferrymen were surprised that very few wraiths boarded the train, and the train ran mostly empty for quite some time. Although the numbers soon began to increase, these wraiths did not board seeking Transcendence, but instead sought merely transportation or a neutral meeting ground. The numbers continued to grow as it became known that any and all were welcome aboard the train. It quickly became apparent that the train was not to become what the Ferrymen had desired it to be; rather, it had become a safe haven for wraiths to gather and conduct business. During its early days, several Ferrymen used to travel with the train, waiting for those who sought guidance; after a time that number dwindled to one. Now only Nicholas remains to oversee the train on its nightly ride through the Tempest, though there are occasional visitations from others. He has gone to great lengths to make the train a convenient gathering spot for wraiths, even going so far as to open up boxcars and the like to ship cargo.

The train now serves a dual purpose for the Ferrymen: First and foremost, it allows them to watch for those who seek guidance toward Transcendence, and secondly, it allows them to keep a watchful eye over those of the many factions who travel aboard the train. Much of what the Ferrymen know of the plans of the Hierarchy and the other factions is gleaned from those who ride the train.

Cast of Characters



Here are a number of regulars who can usually be found on board the Midnight Express, not to mention those who are practically permanent fixtures upon the train. The following is a se-



lection of some of the regulars on the train, as well as descriptions of its permanent residents.

The characters described here and throughout the book do not always include Shadows, Shadow Passions, etc. unless it is relevant to that character's interactions with the players' characters. This is not to say that they never experience Catharsis, just that they will probably not do so in the course of their interactions with the players' characters.

Engineer McClintlock

McClintlock had always dreamed of being an engineer. There was nothing he wanted more than to be at the head of a train, driving through the long night. At the age of 18, he became a brakeman, and by the age of 22, he had become an engineer. Though perhaps not as enthusiastic as he had been in his youth, he did love his job.

After the fateful accident in 1887, McClintlock found himself still aboard his beloved train. He sensed the pull of his Fetters in the Shadowlands, but somehow felt more compelled to stay with his train, and has been here ever since, his Fetters having long since faded away. McClintlock serves as the engineer for the Midnight Express, a task that requires a great deal of his concentration. He is aware of the influence that the

Ferrymen have over the train, and in fact knows Nicholas personally. Nicholas has been trying to help guide him toward Transcendence for some time now, but McClintock prefers to stay with his engine, feeling that this is the best afterlife he could ask for.

Nature: Traditionalist

Demeanor: Curmudgeon

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 1

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 4, Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 3

Skills: Drive (Train) 5, Repair 5

Knowledges: Enigmas 1, Occult 2, Politics 1, Science 2

Backgrounds: Contacts 3, Eidolon 4, Mentor (Nicholas) 5, Memorium 2

Passions: To keep the train running on time (Duty) 4

Arcanos: Argos 5, Fatalism 5, Usury 2

Fetters: None

Willpower: 7

Pathos: 6

Angst: 3

Image: A fairly large, burly man, he moves with a grace uncommon for one of his size. He has rather wide, plain features, made worse by the fact that his face is always covered in soot and oil. He wears stained coveralls and big black engineer boots. He is constantly stopping to mop his brow with a dirty rag.

Roleplaying Hints: You prefer your own company, and do not like to be disturbed while you are at work — which is always. Though you know much about the train, you will never give away its secrets; however, you may be “tricked” into giving hints to those who engage you in a conversation about trains. You love to hear about the new advances in train technology.

Pierre

Pierre had never been on the Orient Express. He grew up in a rough neighborhood in Paris during the 1920s. Born to a poor family, he entered the work force at the age of 15 to help support his family. Factory work did not suit Pierre though, and he soon left his job and found employment at a local saloon. His career as a bartender was cut short when he was shot during a mugging as he returned from work late one night. His caul was removed by one of the Reapers of the Hierarchy,



who brought him to the slave market of Stygia to be sold. There, he was purchased by Nicholas, who saw something special in this new wraith. He had recently acquired three cars from the destroyed Orient Express, and he felt that Pierre would make an excellent bartender for the train's salon.

At first Pierre was very discontent in his role, as he could not imagine spending eternity as a bartender. Over the years, though, he has come to be quite fond of his position. He has emerged as the train's primary gossipmonger. Everyone knows that if there is a secret to be learned, Pierre will know it. Pierre is deceptively open with his information. He will give away quite a bit until it comes to the vital bit that his customer seeks, then he begins to charge, and his prices are not cheap. Though he will sell information to any interested party, whether she be Hierarchy, Renegade or Heretic, he draws the line at anything that could be potentially harmful to the Midnight Express, which is where his primary loyalty lies. Though he will sell information to the Hierarchy, he has no great love for them, for he knows what his fate could have been had he not been rescued by Nicholas. He has come to be quite grateful to Nicholas for this and still harbors a deep-seated resentment for the Hierarchy.

Pierre is a treasure trove for novice train passengers, as he can tell newcomers a great deal of useful

information. He also knows useful tidbits of gossip about various passengers.

Nature: Judge

Demeanor: Conniver

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 2, Empathy 4, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Mix Drink 5, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Enigmas 2, Investigation 2, Politics 3

Backgrounds: Eidolon 3, Mentor 5, Status (Hierarchy 2, Renegades 4), Wealth 5

Passions: Protect family (Love) 3, Protect the oppressed (Hope) 2

Arcanos: Castigate 4, Fatalism 4, Moliat 3, Usury 5

Fetters: None

Willpower: 7

Pathos: 8

Angst: 2

Image: A tall young man of stocky build. His black hair is worn short, almost a crewcut. He has large, expressive, dark brown eyes.

Roleplaying Hints: You are extremely confident and take pleasure in knowing that you usually have the upper hand in your dealings with others. Though your appearance can be rather intimidating at first, you are quite expert at putting others at ease.

Emile Bercé

Emile was the maitre d'hôtel of the newly refurbished Simplon-Orient Express at the time of its crash and his death. The restaurant business was his life's dream, and being in charge of the restaurant on the Orient Express was like a dream come true. He did his best to see to it that both the food and the service were the best in Europe. Though staff members called him a tyrant behind his back, deep down inside they knew that he was one of the best.

After his death, there was nothing he wished more than to return to his position on the Orient Express, because he valued it even more than he did his Fetters in the Skinlands. Upon learning that his restaurant car had been incorporated to the Midnight Express, he became determined to return to his original position. He boarded the train and demanded to speak with the



train's operator, stating in no uncertain terms that he would not leave until he had done so. Recognizing Emile for who he was, Nicholas chose to speak with him. After listening to Emile's insistence that he be allowed to retain his old position, Nicholas decided to let him stay on as the train's maitre d'.

Emile continues to serve as the maitre d' of the restaurant car on the Orient Express portion of the Midnight Express. He is very precise in his duties, ever striving toward perfection. Since the Hierarchy have established that section of the train as their regular meeting place, he has made several strong contacts among that faction. He feels that they are the most sensible of the factions; the Renegades are too crude; and the Heretics are just plain loons. He even acts as a spy for them on occasion, because his position places him in a great position to overhear snippets of conversation that are often useful to the Hierarchy. He has even begun to suspect that Pierre is actually in service to the Renegades.

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Critic

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 1, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 3, Intimidation 2, Subterfuge 1

Skills: Etiquette 5, Leadership 2, Stealth 1

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 3, Linguistics 4

Backgrounds: Mentor (Nicholas) 5, Status (Hierarchy) 4, Wealth 4

Passions: To serve the patrons of the Orient Express (Duty) 3, Amass great wealth (greed) 2

Arcanos: Castigate 3, Lifeweb 2, Moliat 3, Usury 5

Fetters: None

Willpower: 9

Pathos: 6

Angst: 4

Image: Short and slender of build, he has short, well-groomed black hair, graying at the temples. He has a pencil-thin, immaculately trimmed mustache and small, wicked eyes that seem to pierce anyone he fixes his gaze upon.

Roleplaying Hints: You never have anything pleasant to say about anything or anyone. Everything needs improvement, and you are the one to see to it that it gets done.

Nicholas

Nicholas lived and died in sixth century Britain, a time when petty warlords ruled that island, each squabbling for small scraps of land. He himself was one of the warlords, and a powerful one at that. Nicholas died during the time of turmoil and restructuring that followed



the first Maelstrom. Christianity had begun to spread throughout the world, and paganism had begun to fall by the wayside. Just prior to his death, Nicholas had been converted to Christianity by a missionary who had come to his village. Even so, he did not immediately accompany the Fishers who approached him, instead setting out to explore the afterlife on his own. It was during this time of wandering that he encountered one of the Ferryman, who helped set him on the path to Transcendence. After many years of searching, Nicholas finally found that which he sought, Transcendence. Though standing at the threshold of his goal, thoughts of the Ferryman who had guided him on this path came to him, and he wondered if he would have ever made it this far without that assistance. Then he thought of all the other wraiths who wandered the Shadowlands and Stygia, lost and alone, with no real hope of ever achieving Transcendence without someone else's help. At that moment, Nicholas turned his back on the path he had been following and chose instead to help others seek that which he had sought for so long.

Despite having turned his back on the Fishers, Nicholas' beliefs in how one should go about achieving Transcendence somewhat parallel Christian beliefs. Before achieving Transcendence, a wraith must overcome his own Shadow. Nicholas believes that before this can be accomplished, an individual must possess certain qualities, though of course these qualities can be learned. He has devised something of a test, the test of Self, Selflessness, and Patience, to evaluate those he feels may be ready to begin the road to Transcendence.

Being one of the foremost proponents of forming the Midnight Express, Nicholas was charged with ensuring that the Midnight Express makes its nightly journey in safety. He delights in his duty because it places him in close contact with a great variety of wraiths. From among these he chooses those few he feels are ready to begin the path toward Transcendence. His guidelines are very strict, and only a very few whom he feels are ready are chosen. He will approach those he feels are ready and give them advice that can help them along the proper road to Transcendence. If this advice is heeded, he will continue to come to them and guide them. During the months or years that one of his chosen is on the road, Nicholas will appear to her many times, each time in a different guise (though these encounters will almost always occur on the Midnight Express); when the time is right, the wraith will get some

urge to board the train. This urge may be for any reason and may be as simple as the wraith deciding that she needs to visit Cleveland. Only when the wraith is in the final stages toward Transcendence will Nicholas reveal himself to the wraith as one of the Ferryman. Those who actively seek the Ferryman rarely find him.

Note: Nicholas does not have a Shadow, because — as a Ferryman — he has reconciled his Shadow and achieved Transcendence.

Nature: Judge

Demeanor: Architect

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 6, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 7, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Awareness 7, Brawl 5, Empathy 3, Intimidation 4, Subterfuge 5

Skills: Etiquette 4, Firearms 3, Leadership 7, Meditation 5, Melee 7, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 4, Enigmas 6, Investigation 3, Law 3, Linguistics 7, Occult 5, Politics 2

Backgrounds:

Passions:

Arcanos: Argos 5, Castigate 5, Fatalism 5, Keening 3, Lifeweb 5, Moliat 2, Outrage 4

Fetters: None

Willpower: 10

Pathos: 10

Angst: 0

Notes: Nicholas certainly may have other abilities beyond those listed here; the Storyteller should allow him to accomplish nearly anything needed to further the story. He also has access to several artifacts and relics of the Storyteller's choosing, one of which is an ancient sword fashioned from enchanted Stygian steel. This blade causes aggravated wounds to all who are struck by it.

Image: A short but powerful-looking man, he has light-blond hair and a beard. His bright green eyes glow with intensity. When appearing in person, he usually wears the traditional garb of a sixth-century British warlord, though he often alters his shape when traveling among others, so as to not be recognized.


Roleplaying Hints: You have seen the way to Transcendence but have turned your back on it in order to help others find the path. At times you regret your decision, but the joys of seeing others pass on keep you faithful to your ideals.

Train Security Guards

These wraiths come in all shapes and sizes, but all have two things in common: the ability to fight, and an unwavering loyalty to their master, Nicholas. Though each of their stories and backgrounds is different, they all have a common thread: At some time since they became a wraith, Nicholas saved them from some terrible fate. All have sworn their loyalty and service to Nicholas in exchange for the aid he provided them. Some are under the agreement that they will go their own way in a certain number of years, while others seek Nicholas' guidance in discovering Transcendence and have vowed to stay with him forever.

The train guards do not make themselves overly obvious while the train is in transit. Instead, they prefer to remain innocuous, blending in among the passengers while the bulk of them remain in a central location within the train. The leaders of any group, guards are able to remain in constant communication with one another through use of a special power, which is taught to them by Nicholas. Also, many have learned to use Flicker, allowing them to travel nearly instantaneously to any location on the train. There are approximately two dozen guards on board the train at any given time. Though each of the guards is a very unique individual, the following are some basic statistics that can be used in a pinch if the characters encounter one of them.





Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4
Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 1
Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Brawling 3, Intimidation 2, Subterfuge 1
Skills: Firearms 2, Melee 1, Stealth 2
Knowledges: Investigation 2, Linguistics 2
Backgrounds: Mentor (Nicholas) 5, Wealth 2
Arcanos: Argos 3, Embody 2, Moliare 2, Outrage 1
Fetters: None
Willpower: 6

Angst: 3

Notes: Most of the guards will be armed with some sort of relic weapon. This may be anything from a knife to a handgun.

Image: May be of any description, male or female. Most wear a uniform of black pants and a gray turtleneck. No insignia or other device is worn, so they remain as unobtrusive as possible.


Roleplaying Hints: Your primary duty is to Nicholas and to the passengers of the Midnight Express. You will do anything to ensure their safety.





A Shadow of Doubt

*Clowns to the left of me, jokers to the right,
Here I am, stuck in the middle with you*
—Dealer's Wheel, "Stuck in the Middle With You"



he Midnight Express is an amazingly regular method of travel in the Shadowlands, and it stands to reason that it would have its share of regular passengers. One of these is Scott Frances, the linchpin of this story. The characters meet him in the Pullman parlor car of the Midnight Express. As new passengers, they should be surprised and maybe a little intimidated by the degree of familiarity the conductor shows him.

Frances is friendly, but acts a little distraught, asking the characters if they have seen a woman named Priscilla, whom he is supposed to meet. Careful conversation with him will reveal that, quite simply, he isn't playing with all 52 cards. If asked, the conductor may tell the characters that Frances has been a regular on the train for decades, always riding in this car, always looking for Priscilla.

Several hours after Scott Frances boards the train, it pulls into the way station. This should be a tense

time for the characters; out the windows they can see countless Hierarchy Legionnaires. The way station itself resembles more a fortress than a train station, which is relatively accurate.

Shortly after the Midnight Express leaves the way station and the characters are beginning to relax, a very complex hostage situation takes place in their car. How the events unfold is completely up to the characters; they have the opportunity to prevent a disaster on the train.

Theme

This adventure offers the players a chilling, cautionary example of what the Shadow is capable of and the lengths it will go to embrace Oblivion. The role Scott Frances plays in this episode should give them a dark glimpse of what fate may await them at the hands of their own Shadows.

Mood

The mood of this adventure is a combination of mystery and hope. There is so much going on here, so many false leads and complications, that the players should feel hopelessly confused at first. Finally, the players should feel that the fate of everyone on the Midnight Express rests with them, and that they alone have the power to save them.

Background

Scott Frances' Shadow has learned a lot in the century it's been around. It has learned the "lost traveler" shtick, and uses it whenever it wants something. The train is Frances' main reason to go on existing, so his Shadow is planning on removing that reason forever — by destroying the Midnight Express.

The Shadow has made its devious plan with the aid of area Spectres and a Renegade sleepwalker (a Shadow with the Shadow Life thorn). They have convinced a group of Renegades that an important Hierarchy is on the train, and that kidnapping him would be a terrible slap in the face to the Hierarchy. Frances' Shadow has given them detailed information about the Midnight Express and its crew, and they have made good use of it.

The Renegades' plan is to enter the parlor car as it is speeding away from the way station in the Tempest (with aid from their inside man, Frances' Shadow), seize the car's passengers as hostages (so no outcry will be made), and take the VIP. In reality, the Renegade group contains several Doppelgangers (posing as Renegades) and Shadow Frances' Shadow ally, who is dominant. Their intent is to take control of the engine, with the ultimate goal of derailing the Midnight Express, leaving all of the passengers at the mercy of the Tempest and the beasts that dwell within it.

Some of the Renegades are just what they appear to be. If they realize (with the characters' aid) they are being used as the dupes of Spectres, they could be allies. The Midnight Express is an invaluable tool for the Renegades, and they don't want to see it destroyed.

To further complicate matters, there actually is a Hierarchy VIP on the train. Brandon Shaw is traveling on the train to Pensacola, Florida, where he will be installed as the new Governor. Traveling with him are half a cohort of Legionnaires, and a crate of relics (some

of which are weapons). How he and/or the Legionnaires react to the crisis depends largely on the players.

Finally, either Scott Frances or the Renegades could overcome their Shadows, and neither wants to destroy the train. Indeed, Frances sees the parlor car as his only chance of finding Priscilla, and he would die to save it.

In fact, the Midnight Express is in no real danger. Even if the players completely botch their rescue attempt, Stillwell and Nicholas will immediately put a stop to the attempted sabotage. However, the players should feel that everything depends on them. Stillwell and Nicholas should not even know of the plot until the end.

Scott Frances

Scott Frances was a reasonably successful book salesman from Chicago, circa 1890. After struggling for a few years following college, he was beginning to make his mark in his chosen profession. Being a sensible sort, he put aside a little every month, amassing a small nest egg. In the autumn of 1893, he found the reason for which he had been saving: Priscilla Barnes.

They met in an Omaha bookstore; Scott literally bumped into her. By way of an apology, he took her out for a cup of coffee, which turned into a rather extended dinner. Over the next several months, he arranged to see her whenever he was in the area, even going so far as not to sleep so he could ride the late train back to



Chicago to make it to work by 9:00 a.m. In January of 1894, he proposed to her, and she accepted.

They began making plans for a spring wedding in the following year. On the fateful day of his death, Scott was riding to Omaha to finalize the plans. Unfortunately for the two of them, he never made it. A Pullman worker, outraged at the Pullman management for suppressing their employees, sabotaged several cars, including the parlor car in which Scott Frances was riding. On a crucial turn, the brakes in that car failed, causing a jackknife in the middle of the train. Scott was trapped in the wreckage, pinned under the wheel assembly. Amidst the panicked screams of the wounded and dying, he strained repeatedly against the unyielding metal. He didn't notice his own very serious (and eventually fatal) wounds; he had to meet Priscilla at the station. As death mercifully took him, his last thought was that Priscilla would be devastated. Since his death, he has been riding trains and searching stations, vainly trying to keep an appointment a century overdue.

Scott still searches for Priscilla on the train. He has ridden the Midnight Express countless times since his death, always in the Pullman parlor car. The conductor and several of both the regular passengers and the staff know him. The conductor feels sorry for him, and extends to him an extraordinary degree of courtesy. Storytellers should emphasize this, as it will encourage the players to trust him, thus making the betrayal by his Shadow all the more dramatic.

Nature: Fanatic

Demeanor: Caregiver

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 1, Brawl 2, Empathy 3, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Etiquette 2, Melee 2

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 2, Enigmas 2, Linguistics (French) 1, Occult 1

Backgrounds: Contacts (Stillwell) 1, Wealth 1

Passions: Find Priscilla (Love) 4, Protect lovers from accidental death (Hope) 1

Arcanos: Fatalism 1, Lifeweb 2, Moliat 2

Fetters: Regal Booksellers (where he met Priscilla), 3

Willpower: 4

Pathos: 3

Angst: 3

Shadow: Director



Thorns: Spectre Renown 2, Shadow Life, Shadow Traits (Brawl + 2, Melee +2)

Shadow Passions: Cause accidents (Anger) 3, Encourage dissent/betrayal (Bitterness) 2

Image: Scott Frances is in his late 20s. He is of average height, has a wiry build, and is dressed in an elegant, outdated suit. He has a handsome face, though at times it can look a little drawn (especially on the train). When his Shadow is dominant, the tension seems to drain out of his features, and his gaze rests intently on the object of his interest.

Roleplaying notes: You are usually friendly to others. While a little reticent at first, you become relatively talkative once you feel you know someone. You generally have a faraway look in your eyes, as if in silent reverie. When someone jolts you out of this, slowly smile a melancholy smile. It is almost as if you are embarrassed at being caught, yet unable to deny your pain, even to a total stranger. At every stop, become tense and anticipatory (looking for Priscilla). When you don't find her, become despondent; time or interaction with someone can bring you out. However, you are convinced that you will find Priscilla, and will ignore any argument or evidence that suggests you won't. When your Shadow is dominant, you are a little more talkative, intent on drawing others out.

Act I: All Aboard...



When one realizes that life is pointless he either commits suicide or travels.

— Edward Dahlberg, novelist

Scene One

In this scene, the players' Circle boards the Midnight Express from somewhere in the Mountain time zone in the United States. The city of departure and reasons for boarding are left up to the individual Storyteller, who should feel free to fit this in as a side adventure or part of an ongoing chronicle.

As the characters board the train, Stillwell checks their tickets and directs them to the Pullman parlor car. He is generally amiable, and will answer any questions the neophyte passengers may have for him (assuming he knows the answer). Take the time to describe the car to the players (see the **Appendix** for details),





and set the mood. Stress the disparity between the antique setting and the characters themselves. Encourage the players to interact with their fellow passengers as long as it is interesting (see **The Other Passengers**, below). As the train gets ready to pull into the Pacific time zone, Stillwell walks through and tells the passengers that they will be unable to move between cars at the stop. Emphasize the strangeness of the stop itself; the windows of the cars become opaque preceding and following the stop, making it impossible to know what is going on.

The Other Passengers

Ruby: Ruby is an ancient, white-haired woman with a serenely wrinkled face and a Cajun accent. She is wearing a faded dress with a floral pattern, and is carrying a large black purse, which she holds in her lap. Ruby was a very pious woman in life, fully expecting to pass through the pearly gates upon death. When she found herself in the Shadowlands, she was at first convinced she was in Hell. With time, however, she decided that she was merely being tested. She is now a Heretic, and believes the path to Transcendence lies in accepting one's fate. Consequently, she is kind and nonjudgmental, but not a terribly interesting conversationalist.

Louie: Louie is a small, nervous man in a bad suit. He has a thin mustache, slicked-back hair, and a large gold ring on his left hand, which he twists restlessly. He died while working on his one big score, killed by his "business associates." Louie is still looking for the big score, unfortunately with the same luck he had while alive. He is fleeing from trouble, but he won't say what it is or where he's from. He will panic in a crisis.

Donald Beck: Beck is a man in his late 50s, a little paunchy and fatherly. If asked, he tells the characters that he is going to look after his daughter, who is away at college in New York. He is very willing to talk, and will relate countless tales of winter in Minnesota and the Minneapolis Twins' greatest games. He will do whatever it takes to make it to New York safely.

Cynthia: Cynthia is a thin, mousy girl trying desperately to convince the world she is cool. Her short blond hair is carefully mussed, her Dead Kennedys T-shirt artfully torn, and her jeans sport the obligatory ripped knees. Always afraid that people would realize how totally uncool she was, Cyn (as she likes to be called) spent every moment on guard, trying to figure out how to impress people. Before her VW Bug became



one with a freight train, she never received validation of her own worth — no one acknowledged her coolness. Now she searches for people who can accept her for who she is. Unfortunately, Cyn isn't sure who that is anymore. She is more than happy to talk to any character about any topic (preferably one of their choosing). It only takes a little while to realize that she actually knows very little about any given topic and is only trying to impress everyone. When trouble occurs, she will sit mutely, immediately obeying the orders of whoever she thinks is in charge.

Scene Two

The characters' car opens in San Francisco, where Scott Frances boards. If any of the characters catch his eye, he will smile tightly at them, take his seat, and pull out a book (Keats: one of his relics). Once the Midnight Express gets underway, Stillwell comes through collecting tickets. He greets Frances by name; make sure the players notice this.

In roleplaying their interaction, there are several things to keep in mind. First, Stillwell is quite familiar with Mr. Frances. He has seen him ride the train for almost as long as he has been conductor, always searching for Priscilla. Stillwell feels sorry for him. At several points in the past, he has tried to gently point out to Frances that Priscilla must surely be dead, and Frances should accept it and move on. Once, Frances attacked him, and on another occasion, collapsed into incoherent sobs. It was the latter incident that persuaded Stillwell that Frances refuses to face, or is incapable of facing, this unbearable truth. Since that time, he has shown Frances an extraordinary degree of courtesy and kindness.

At some level, Frances understands Stillwell's concern for him. As a consequence, when he is speaking to Stillwell, he continues the polite banter for as long as he is able. The longer he goes without asking about Priscilla, the more tense and edgy he becomes, until he can contain himself no longer. He phrases the question somewhat indirectly; has Stillwell seen an attractive brunette board the train? (The actual description: 5'7", mid-length wavy brown hair, brown eyes, long maroon

velvet coat, hat, etc., Gay 90s style. Think Joanna Going from "Dark Shadows," second series.). Unable to shatter his hope, Stillwell says that while he has not, some of the other passengers may have. Feel free to play up the emotional subtext of the scene. Characters with a high Empathy stand to get a great deal of information out of the exchange.

After Stillwell leaves the car, Frances begins questioning the other passengers. If one of the characters has made contact with him previously, he approaches that individual first. Frances is very polite, but there is an edginess in his questions. After it becomes apparent that no one has seen Priscilla, he continues conversing if engaged (you may want to encourage the players to do this). If not, he takes his seat again and returns to his book.

There are several hours with no stops between the West Coast stop and the way station. Some of the other passengers attempt to get comfortable and sleep. Due to the speed at which the Midnight Express travels, passengers who boarded before or after the characters may sleep at different times. It is important that Scott Frances does not appear to sleep. Instead, he seems to almost nod off, jerking back to wakefulness. This is when his Shadow takes over (the Shadow Life Thorn). When it does assume control, it carefully observes the passengers over the top of Frances' book. After it feels it has a fair grasp on the situation and the other wraiths, it puts the book away and talks with them. (Note: Be careful not to emphasize this shift in personality too strongly. The Shadow is wily and intelligent, and has had a long time to get its act down pat. If the characters think it is still the same person, it will make the betrayal all the more shocking, but you should still give them a chance.)

In describing the train, stress the confined nature of traveling through the Tempest. There is no music in the car, there is no scenery outside the window, save for perhaps the occasional glimpse of figures in the distance (feel free to add anything that will make the players more nervous), and the only books belong to Scott Frances.

For descriptions of the other cars and their occupants, see the **Appendix**.





Act II: The Way Station



*don't want to spend the rest of my days
Keeping out of trouble like the soldier says
I don't want to spend my time in hell
Looking at the walls of a prison cell
I don't ever want to play the part
Of a statistic on a government chart
— The Police, "Invisible Sun"*

Scene One

As the Midnight Express prepares to enter the way station, the atmosphere on board changes. Stillwell travels from car to car, announcing that all passengers should return to their cars and that passengers transferring to Stygia should be ready. If any of the characters are in a car other than their own, a regular passenger or staff member may comment on the irregularity of having to return to their own cars. Usually the passengers can stay wherever they like on the train. Only those with transfer tickets to Stygia may leave the Midnight Express. If someone wishes to travel to Stygia and has not previously purchased a ticket, she may do so at the way station. Of course, she will have to undergo a very thorough interrogation before she is cleared. The Hierarchy is very paranoid; something about being alone in the middle of the Tempest. Passengers wishing to purchase transfers to Stygia should tell Stillwell, who will make arrangements with the way station staff.

The train noticeably slows at this point. Characters brave enough or curious enough to look out the windows see a haze in the distance. As the train draws nearer, the compound begins to take shape. The first things the characters notice are the watchtowers: dark metal structures with what look like searchlights scanning the darkness. In reality, the "searchlights" are rotating platforms with reflective lenses mounted at the back. The "lamps" are thralls who have been Moliated and chained to the platform. Between the towers is a massive wall topped with spikes; think Fort Goth. Blindfolded men (Blindfold of Justice; see the Appendix in **Wraith: The Oblivion**) with crossbows patrol the top of the wall, and perceptive characters may notice ballistae mounted in the towers themselves.

The Midnight Express slows practically to a crawl as the massive gates grudgingly part. The Legionnaires

atop the wall follow the train intently with their crossbows. Once inside, the train comes to a complete stop. Pairs of Legionnaires examine the entire exterior of the train, from top to bottom. The sight of all these armed, blindfolded servants of the Hierarchy should make the characters nervous. Do whatever you can to encourage this. Point out to them that the gates shut behind the train, and getting out of the way station would prove exceedingly difficult should the Hierarchy wish to detain them. Some of the other passengers may freak out after sitting there for a time, specifically Louie and Cynthia. Frances' Shadow stays low key throughout the wait, but if he can increase the tension with a few innocuous words, he will.

After a painfully long wait (stretch it out as long as the players are interested and/or tense), a medium-sized party moves from the station house. Four Legionnaires with gladii (plural of *gladius*, the official sidearm of the Roman legions) flank someone who is obviously an officer, and a figure in a mask of office. This is Brandon Shaw, who is traveling to the Necropolis of Pensacola, where he is to be installed as the new governor. Shortly after he boards, manacled thralls under the supervision of several Legionnaires move a large crate into the Dachau freight car. Two guards are placed in the car with the crate. The Midnight Express prepares to get underway again, and the attention of all the Legionnaires is redirected to the Tempest. As the train slowly begins to move, the gate at the other end of the compound slowly opens. The characters will probably feel a sense of relief at leaving the way station. Remind them that beyond the gate there is only the Tempest, waiting.

Scene Two

Now that the Midnight Express has left the way station and returned to the relative normalcy of the Tempest, everyone should feel the tension draining away. Everyone, that is, save for Scott Frances. He wonders aloud if Priscilla was at the station, and wishes that he could have looked for her. If none of the characters console him, he will ask if anyone thinks it is possible that she is in the crate in the freight car. The crate contains Brandon Shaw's personal belongings, as well as 15 oboli, eight gladii, two crossbows, and 20 quarrels. Frances rapidly escalates into near-hysteria, moving from window to window, looking for Priscilla. The Shadow is actually looking for signs of the Renegade

strike team; the hysteria is just an act. It is important that Frances freak out quickly; the train cannot have reached full speed before the Renegades board. Try and arrange this to take place just out of sight of the way station.

Suddenly, everyone hears a thumping sound come from the door at the front of the car. Calling out Priscilla's name, Frances rushes toward the door. If the characters try to stop him, they can easily overpower him; if not, he opens the door. Regardless of who opens it, they all see a tall man with long, dark hair, a cruel visage, and a bowie knife. This is Kelly, Frances' sleep-walker ally. Behind him is Henshaw, a Doppelganger. If the characters make a run for the rear door, Frances plays his trump by brutally attacking one of them, cackling evilly. If all of the characters enter into combat, one of the other passengers makes a break for the door, only to see three more armed Renegades.

If the characters want to fight, stress that there are five armed Renegades and Frances' Shadow to deal with. The Renegades aren't really interested in killing the passengers, and they announce this to everyone. To validate this, they even have several sets of manacles with them. If the fighting is getting heavy, have one of the

Renegades break off and chain one of the other passengers to demonstrate their non-lethal intent (Ruby would be perfect). It is vital that the characters be captured by the Renegades. Conveniently, they only have four sets of manacles, which will be used on the other passengers. The players' characters are bound with belts, shoelaces, and relic rope (see Renegades' Equipment, below). All of the passengers are guarded. During the encounter, try to avoid any disincorporation, while at the same time make the players feel that they are overpowered.

The Renegades

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

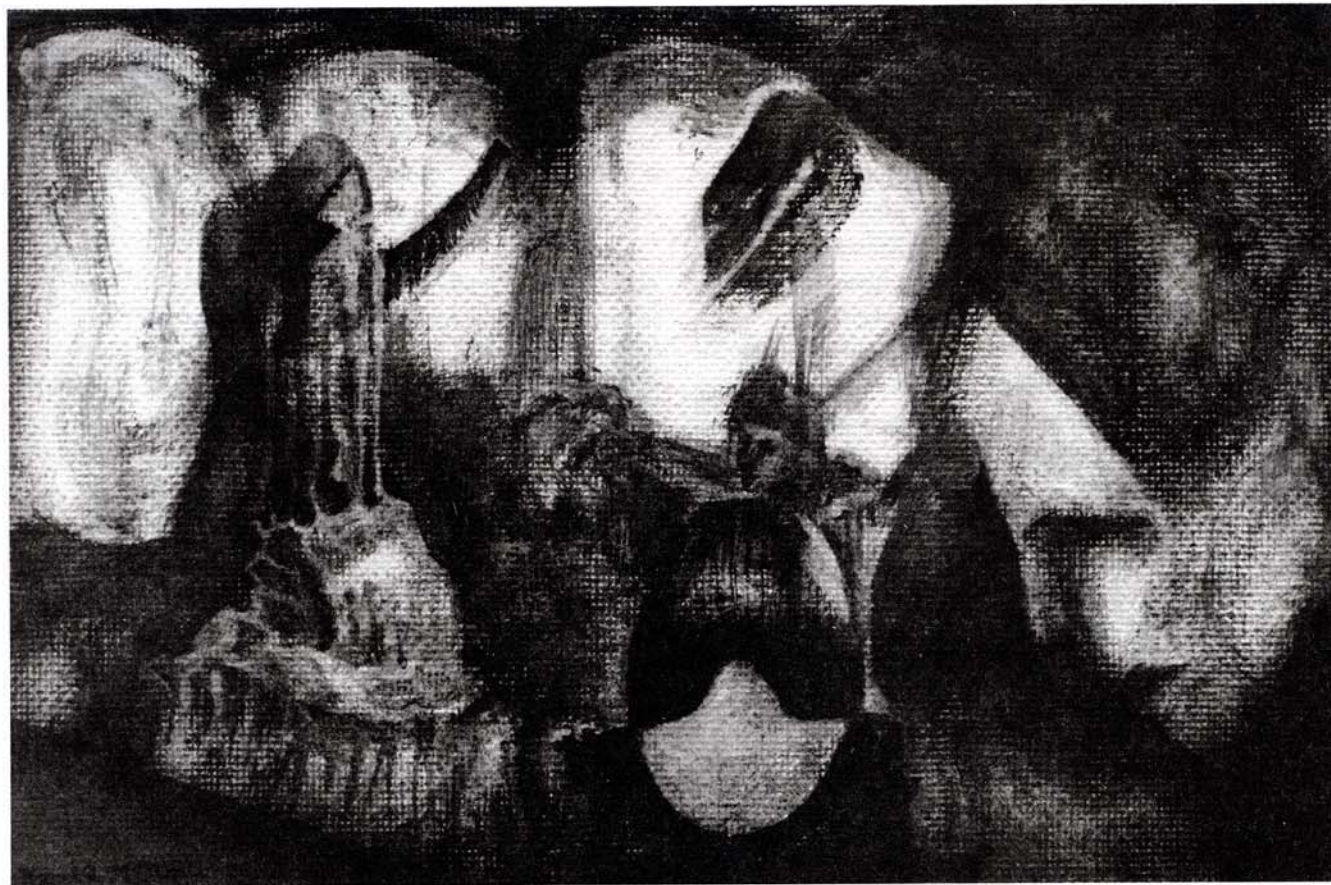
Talents: Alertness 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Intimidation 2, Subterfuge 2


Skills: Melee 3, Security 1, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Politics 2

Backgrounds: none

Passions: Destroy the Hierarchy/Free the oppressed (Anger) 3





Arcanos: Argos 1, Fatalism 2, Usury 2 (**Note:** Leo, one of the Doppelgangers, has Moliat 2)

Fetters: None

Corpus: 8 (boarding the train caused some damage)

Willpower: 5

Pathos: 5

Angst: 4 (10 for the Doppelgangers)

Shadow Passions: (for the Spectres) Cause suffering/Feed Oblivion (Hate) 3

Equipment: Kelly and the two Doppelgangers have Darksteel knives, Margaret has a Louisville Slugger and a 10-foot coil of rope (which was used in a hanging suicide), and Max has a billy club.

Note: Kelly is the sleepwalker, Henshaw and Leo are the Doppelgangers, and Margaret and Max are the Renegades.

Scene Three

Once the characters and the other passengers have been subdued, Margaret tells the assembled that if they just cooperate, no one will get hurt, because it is not the policy of the Dead Army of Retribution (D.A.R.) to execute noncombatants. Leo uses Sculpt to make himself, Kelly and Max look like three of the passengers' Circle; Frances suggests that the most compassionate and/or the most combatant of the characters be the models. Leo then marks those passengers whose features he "borrowed" in various ways, making them look like Spectres. Some suggestions are: radically different skin color (red, black, indigo), glowing eyes and mouths, forked tongues, horns, etc. This serves two purposes: It will protect their disguises, and it will make it very difficult for the characters to get help should they escape. Kelly explains all of this to them in great detail, painting a picture of their instant slaughter should they escape.

With their disguises in place, Leo, Kelly, Max, and Frances leave the car in pairs. Kelly and Frances go forward, while Leo and Max move toward the end of the train. This leaves the characters with Henshaw and Margaret. During this scene, Henshaw doesn't say much, forcefully telling the passengers to shut up when they try and talk to him. He swaggers around the car with his knife in hand, pacing back and forth like a dangerous caged animal. Henshaw periodically moves to a window and stares out intently, as if looking for something.

The players should feel anxious, as if he could attack them at any moment.

The Dead Army of Retribution

The D.A.R. is a Renegade sect that is dedicated to revolution and revenge. Adherents believe that personal freedom is an inherent right of all wraiths, and that personal liberty should be extended until it infringes upon someone else. Consequently, the Hierarchy is evil itself, because not only does it force slavery and servitude on its subjects, but its entire economy is based on the trade of souls and soul-forged goods. This means that several Heretic groups are also "evil." As far as the D.A.R. is concerned, so be it.

In their missions, D.A.R. agents will not try to harm non-offending wraiths, though anyone with a pocket full of oboli or flaunting Darksteel items could become a difficulty of opportunity. On the Midnight Express, this also includes anyone eating in the dining car. Some agents take a particular joy in using Stygian chains and manacles against Hierarchy foes and their stooges (anyone who refuses to see the light of the truth after being exposed to it). The use of Darksteel weapons and oboli is a point of contention within the D.A.R. On the one hand, it would be poetic justice to defeat the Hierarchy with the tokens of their abuses, while on the other, they would be using the tools and methods of the enemy. Only the fear of feeding Oblivion prevents the latter group from destroying all such items encountered.

This is a perfect opportunity for the characters to try and talk their way out of the mess they are in. Margaret is more than willing to enter into a political debate. She is a true believer in the D.A.R. and will fervently answer any questions, according to the party line. So convinced is she of the righteousness of her cause, she assumes that the passengers will join her if only they are made aware of her beliefs. This is especially true of the players' characters, as they show more initiative and resistance than the other passengers.

Even if no one prompts her, she begins ranting about the evils of the Hierarchy. In her revolutionary dialectic, make sure she states her views on Darksteel items and soul-forged goods. Perceptive characters may ask about the manacles and the three Darksteel knives the group possesses (especially if one of the characters has been cut by one of the knives). Margaret defends her views on the subject, but weakly says that there is no official D.A.R. policy against using the weapons of the Hierarchy against them. Henshaw smirks and sneers at

this, and seems generally disgusted at her speeches. Make sure the characters notice this, but don't hit them over the head with it. It is an opportunity to cause some friction between their captors.

Characters who make an Empathy + Perception roll (difficulty 8) have the chance to learn several things. The effects are cumulative; someone who got three successes would also know the information for one and two successes.

1 success	Margaret sincerely believes in what she is telling the characters.
2 successes	Henshaw seems poised on the edge of violence.
3 successes	Margaret is very disturbed by the presence of the manacles and Darksteel knives.
4 successes	Henshaw violently dislikes Margaret.
5 successes	Margaret actively distrusts Henshaw.
6 successes	When, not if, Henshaw snaps, he may be as likely to attack Margaret as the passengers.
7+ successes	Henshaw is likely to torture and kill everyone in the car.

This is the point where the characters may free themselves. The tension between their two guards is the key. If the characters don't cause enough friction between Henshaw and Margaret, Henshaw will become so enraged at her revolutionary zeal and good intentions that he attacks her (with his Darksteel knife). For the characters to break their bonds requires three accumulated successes on a Strength + Athletics roll (difficulty 8); to wriggle free requires three accumulated successes on a Dexterity + Security roll (difficulty 7). If no one escapes on their own, Margaret will knock Henshaw down long enough to free the character most receptive to her speech, demanding that he/she help her against Henshaw.

Whether Margaret survives this encounter is entirely up to the Storyteller. It would be simpler if both she and Henshaw were neutralized, whether this is by disincorporation or capture. If either survive, the characters have the opportunity to question them about the plans. The Renegade plan is to locate the Hierarchy, kidnap him, and jump into the Tempest with him. There

is a temporary D.A.R. base not too far away from the tracks, in a small realm. This is all that Margaret knows. At first, Henshaw merely echoes the Renegade plan. It will take five accumulated successes on a resisted roll, Manipulation or Strength + Intimidation (depending on whether the interrogation is verbal or physical) versus Wits or Stamina + Subterfuge, to get the truth out of Henshaw.

If the characters manage to wear Henshaw down, he tells them about the real plan: They intend to derail the Midnight Express. It will take three more interrogation successes before Henshaw confesses that he and Leo are Spectres, and they made this plan with Frances and Kelly's Shadows.

Act III: The Chase



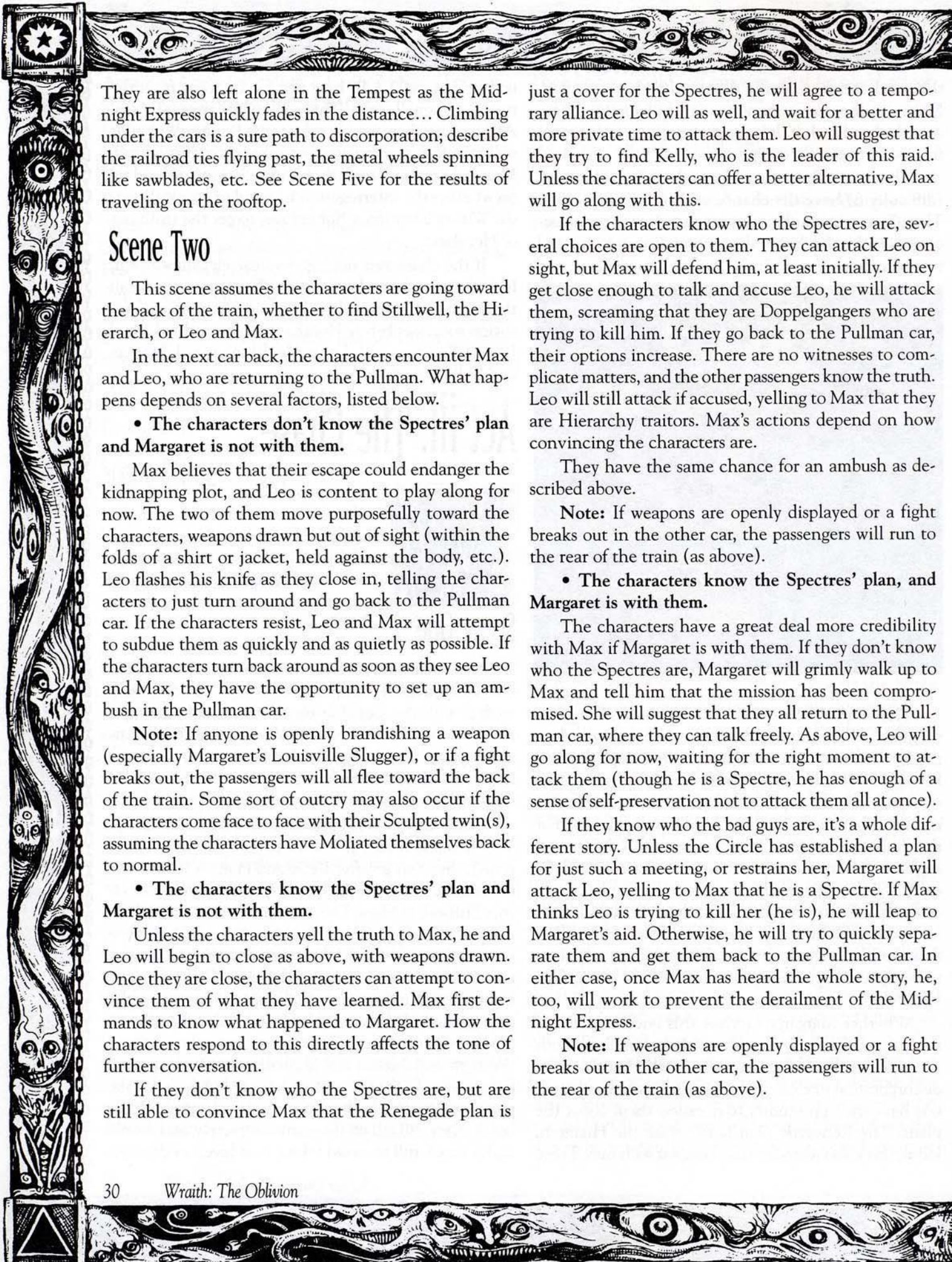
*What is your substance, whereof are you made,
That millions of strange shadows on you
tend?*

— Shakespeare, Sonnet 53

Scene One

Now that they are free, the characters have to decide what to do. If they plan to leave the car, they have to deal with the fact that two of them look like typically evil Spectres (this is no problem if one of the characters possesses Moliat 2). If Margaret survived the fight and heard Henshaw's confession, she insists on helping the characters.

There are several options. The characters can go after Leo and Max (who went toward the back of the train), they can go after Kelly and Frances (who went toward the front), or they can try to find and warn either Stillwell or Shaw. You may want to encourage them to go toward the rear of the train first (see following scenes). If no one has Moliat 2, the characters may try to clamber along the tops of the cars. This requires a Strength + Athletics roll (difficulty 7) to get on the roof, and two Dexterity + Athletics rolls (difficulty 6) per car to avoid falling. To leap between cars requires a Strength + Athletics roll (difficulty 7). On a standard failure, they fall to the roof of the car, and should make a soak roll to avoid taking one level of damage. If they botch, they will fall off the train completely, and should make a soak roll to avoid taking four levels of damage.



They are also left alone in the Tempest as the Mid-night Express quickly fades in the distance... Climbing under the cars is a sure path to discorporation; describe the railroad ties flying past, the metal wheels spinning like sawblades, etc. See Scene Five for the results of traveling on the rooftop.

Scene Two

This scene assumes the characters are going toward the back of the train, whether to find Stillwell, the Hierarch, or Leo and Max.

In the next car back, the characters encounter Max and Leo, who are returning to the Pullman. What happens depends on several factors, listed below.

- **The characters don't know the Spectres' plan and Margaret is not with them.**

Max believes that their escape could endanger the kidnapping plot, and Leo is content to play along for now. The two of them move purposefully toward the characters, weapons drawn but out of sight (within the folds of a shirt or jacket, held against the body, etc.). Leo flashes his knife as they close in, telling the characters to just turn around and go back to the Pullman car. If the characters resist, Leo and Max will attempt to subdue them as quickly and as quietly as possible. If the characters turn back around as soon as they see Leo and Max, they have the opportunity to set up an ambush in the Pullman car.

Note: If anyone is openly brandishing a weapon (especially Margaret's Louisville Slugger), or if a fight breaks out, the passengers will all flee toward the back of the train. Some sort of outcry may also occur if the characters come face to face with their Sculpted twin(s), assuming the characters have Moliated themselves back to normal.

- **The characters know the Spectres' plan and Margaret is not with them.**

Unless the characters yell the truth to Max, he and Leo will begin to close as above, with weapons drawn. Once they are close, the characters can attempt to convince them of what they have learned. Max first demands to know what happened to Margaret. How the characters respond to this directly affects the tone of further conversation.

If they don't know who the Spectres are, but are still able to convince Max that the Renegade plan is

just a cover for the Spectres, he will agree to a temporary alliance. Leo will as well, and wait for a better and more private time to attack them. Leo will suggest that they try to find Kelly, who is the leader of this raid. Unless the characters can offer a better alternative, Max will go along with this.

If the characters know who the Spectres are, several choices are open to them. They can attack Leo on sight, but Max will defend him, at least initially. If they get close enough to talk and accuse Leo, he will attack them, screaming that they are Doppelgangers who are trying to kill him. If they go back to the Pullman car, their options increase. There are no witnesses to complicate matters, and the other passengers know the truth. Leo will still attack if accused, yelling to Max that they are Hierarchy traitors. Max's actions depend on how convincing the characters are.

They have the same chance for an ambush as described above.

Note: If weapons are openly displayed or a fight breaks out in the other car, the passengers will run to the rear of the train (as above).

- **The characters know the Spectres' plan, and Margaret is with them.**

The characters have a great deal more credibility with Max if Margaret is with them. If they don't know who the Spectres are, Margaret will grimly walk up to Max and tell him that the mission has been compromised. She will suggest that they all return to the Pullman car, where they can talk freely. As above, Leo will go along for now, waiting for the right moment to attack them (though he is a Spectre, he has enough of a sense of self-preservation not to attack them all at once).

If they know who the bad guys are, it's a whole different story. Unless the Circle has established a plan for just such a meeting, or restrains her, Margaret will attack Leo, yelling to Max that he is a Spectre. If Max thinks Leo is trying to kill her (he is), he will leap to Margaret's aid. Otherwise, he will try to quickly separate them and get them back to the Pullman car. In either case, once Max has heard the whole story, he, too, will work to prevent the derailment of the Mid-night Express.

Note: If weapons are openly displayed or a fight breaks out in the other car, the passengers will run to the rear of the train (as above).

Scene Three

This scene assumes the characters have made it past Leo and Max, and are continuing toward the rear of the train (to find Stillwell, Shaw, or whatever).

- **No outcry was raised in the previous scene.**

If no outcry was made and they aren't openly carrying weapons, the characters can proceed to the Orient Express dining car without further incident. When they enter the car, all eyes turn toward them. Emile, the maitre d' (see page 13 for Emile's stats), walks over to them, condescension oozing from every pore. He looks them over slowly, sniffs derisively, and asks how he can help them. If the characters falter, or ask about Stillwell or Shaw, Emile will state that this is a dining car, and he assumes they are here to dine, no? If they are openly holding weapons, Emile snaps his fingers to summon a burly busboy, who will offer to check them. Emile will insist that weapons are not only against policy, but that they interfere with the ambience (at a table in the rear of the car, the characters can see the Hierarch Brandon Shaw seated with the centurion, his table flanked by armed Legionnaires). Let Emile give them a hard time for as long as it is entertaining.

If the characters stubbornly refuse to give up their weapons, Shaw dispatches one of his Legionnaires to see what the problem is. This is an opportunity to request an audience. If either Max or Margaret is with the party, they will visibly stiffen when the Legionnaire strides over. If none of the characters say anything to him, they will contemptuously say that they don't need the help of any Hierarchy flunky. If the Renegades become too openly hostile, Emile will look around the half-empty dining car and say that he's very sorry, but he doesn't seem to have a table free at the moment (his tone of voice will show he is anything *but* sorry).

At this point, Shaw calls out, asking Emile to escort the party to his table. Emile graciously concedes, and politely escorts the characters over. All four of the Legionnaires coldly look them over; the players should feel like bacteria under a microscope. The Centurion stares unblinkingly at whoever is speaking. Brandon Shaw is wearing his mask of office, so all that is visible of his face are his ice blue eyes and his mouth.

Shaw asks the characters what it is they require. If the Renegades are with them, they will refuse to talk. If the characters decide to tell him of the Spectres' plot, he will commend them for bringing this matter to his

attention. He will then tell them that their government has further need of them. Since they can recognize both Kelly and Frances, he will send two of his guards with them to apprehend or (preferably) defeat them. If the Renegades are in the party, he will invite them to stay with him. When they naturally balk, he will insist that they sample his hospitality. The Centurion will make a very small sign to two of the Legionnaires, who will simultaneously draw their gladii. Though the Renegades hate the Hierarchy, they will not foolishly sacrifice themselves.

- **An outcry was raised in the previous scene.**


The first two characters who enter the dining car are grabbed by unseen hands and hurled to the floor of the car. When they look up, they see two Legionnaires holding gladii to their throats (no rolls should be made for this). The Centurion is standing a short distance away, and he instructs the rest of the party to surrender their weapons unless they want to see what headless wraiths look like. Encourage the players to surrender. Even a sizable party should feel intimidated by five well-trained Hierarchy soldiers.

The Legionnaires

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2 (the Centurion has 3), Manipulation 2, Appearance 2





Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Talents: Alertness 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Intimidation 3
Skills: Etiquette 2, Firearms 2, Melee 4
Knowledges: (Centurion has Bureaucracy 2, Politics 2)
Backgrounds: none
Passions: Serve the Hierarchy (Pride) 5, Destroy Enemies (Anger) 4, one point of personal Passion
Arcanos: Argos 1, Castigate 2, Moliat 3
Fetters: As needed
Corpus: 10
Willpower: 6
Pathos: 6
Angst: 4
Equipment: Gladius (difficulty 5, damage Strength +3), one set of manacles each

The characters are questioned closely by the Centurion, with mild physical "encouragement" provided by the Legionnaires (no more than one or two levels of damage from a light punch). Make the interrogation seem much more threatening than it actually is. Shaw will allow it to go on until he is convinced that the players are telling the truth. Throughout the entire ordeal, he is sitting at his table, flanked by two Legionnaires, calmly sipping cappuccino.

Once he is convinced, Shaw impresses the characters into service. If the Renegades are with them, they are held "as a token of good faith." As above, Shaw sends two of his Legionnaires with the characters.

Scene Four

This scene assumes the characters are moving forward through the train, either looking for Stillwell or Frances and Kelly. This can take place either before or after Act III, scene two.

The characters move through the cars unmolested (unless they are openly carrying weapons), until they reach the car immediately behind the engine. In the forward end of this car, they see Frances and Kelly, whose attention is focused on what they can see of the engine. If the characters try to sneak up on them, have them make a resisted roll, Dexterity + Stealth versus Perception + Alertness. If successful, they have surprise on whatever action they wish to take. If not, one or both of the sleepwalkers turn to face them. Frances and Kelly quickly realize that their cover is blown. Kelly hurls himself at the characters, intent on blocking the aisle and taking as many of them as possible. Frances

goes through the door to the engine. If either the Renegades or the Legionnaires are with them, conveniently arrange for them to be in the rear of the party.

After the characters defeat Kelly (which shouldn't prove too difficult, seeing that they greatly outnumber him), the train slows slightly. This should prompt the characters to rush into the engine, convinced that the Spectres' plan has come to pass. The first thing they see is the engineer, who is groggily getting to his feet. A Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 6) reveals that the throttle's deadman switch has been released, causing the Midnight Express to slow. A successful Perception + Science roll (difficulty 6) allows the characters to reengage the engine.


Heart-wrenching sobs from the corner of the engine draw the characters' attention. As they look over, they see Stillwell standing over the inconsolable Scott Frances, his hand on Frances' head (Stillwell used Castigate 3 to temporarily banish his Shadow). Stillwell thanks them for their assistance, and asks them to please return to their car. He tells them he must take care of Frances, but will be around as soon as possible. If asked whether he intends to disincorporate him or abandon him to the Tempest, Stillwell gives an emphatic no. He explains that Frances was controlled by his Shadow, and is not truly accountable for his actions. Anyone who thinks otherwise will have to answer to Stillwell.

Scene Five

This scene assumes at least some of the characters are traveling on the roofs of the cars.

- **The players are traveling toward the rear of the train.**

Have the leap onto the roof of the Orient Express dining car be an especially difficult one. As the characters pause to regain their balance, they see a Legionnaire with manacles in hand climb on the roof from the far end of the car. The characters turn to escape and notice that another Legionnaire has climbed aboard behind them, gladius drawn. The Legionnaires' intent is to capture, not kill. The Legionnaire with gladius drawn attacks the character's weapon, attempting to disarm. The other attempts to grapple and manacle. Any combat roll that fails requires a Dexterity + Athletics roll (difficulty 6) to maintain balance. A failure requires a soak roll to avoid taking one level of damage. A botch automatically results in the loss of the next action as the player desperately clings to the roof to avoid slid-



ing off. It also requires a soak roll to avoid taking three levels of damage. Once the characters surrender or are captured, proceed to Act III, scene two.

- **The characters are traveling toward the front of the train.**

Have the leap onto the roof of the last car prove especially difficult. As the characters pause to regain their balance, Kelly climbs on the roof in front of them. He grins evilly as he draws his knife. His intent is to delay the characters as long as possible. He does his best to kill them or throw them off the train (a contested Strength + Brawl roll (difficulty 6); requires a successful grapple first). The results of a failed combat roll are detailed above. Assuming Kelly is defeated, proceed to the latter half of Scene four. (**Note:** If a player's character is thrown off, Stillwell will stop the train to allow her to reboard, assuming she wasn't disincorporated by the fall.)

Conclusion

This scene takes place in the Pullman car. Stillwell enters and thanks the characters for their aid. In gratitude, he promises them royal treatment the next time they travel on the Midnight Express. If Brandon Shaw is holding either or both of the Renegades, Stillwell will see that they are released. If the characters encountered Shaw without attacking a Legionnaire, he will offer them each half an oboli (he will not offer to pay the Renegades). If they did attack a Legionnaire, he will reluctantly pardon their crime.

Depending on how the characters reacted to the Renegades and the Hierarchy, they may gain one point in the appropriate status. In any event, Stillwell will greet them by name the next time they ride the Midnight Express, and treat them as valued passengers. He will inform the rest of the staff to do the same (even Emile).

Scott Frances is under the care of Nicholas, the Ferryman, who interceded at Stillwell's request. If asked about Frances, Stillwell will tell the characters that he is resting and does not wish to be disturbed.




MacDougall



Six-Guns and Soulfire

*There is a lonely place
called the 3:10 to Yuma
A man may meet his fate
For fate travels everywhere...
There's a legend and there's a rumor:
When you take the 3:10 to Yuma
You can hear the ghosts of outlaws go ridin' by...
— Theme from "3:10 to Yuma"*



Six-Guns and Soulfire is a five-act adventure beginning and ending with the Midnight Express. The adventure works best if the characters are independent of the three main factions in **Wraith**. They'll have a difficult choice to make, however — a choice between the Hierarchy and the Renegades.

Theme

The major themes of the adventure are duty and honor, two of the old stand-bys of the Western genre. These motivations are common among many devoted

members of the Hierarchy... or are they? In any group of wraiths, there's often a conflict between one's duty to society and one's rights as an individual. How much should someone give to his societal obligations? How much does society owe him in return? How much should we, as members of society, give for the sake of the world around us? How should we work to change the world around us?

Mood

The adventure can shift through many different moods: nostalgia, a tragic sense of loss, and a touch of comic relief make for a good mix. Don't be afraid to

make it a little melodramatic if that will encourage better roleplaying.

The wraiths the Circle will meet in this adventure have gone soft, and they've taken the benefits of their Necropolis for granted. Now they've left themselves wide open for an attack from the Renegades, and the characters may be the only ones who can save this Western ghost town.

The Storyteller is encouraged to watch a few Westerns to get the mood of this type of adventure down. If the characters manage to save the town of Pumpkin, Arizona, it could easily become a recurring location in a campaign. "High Noon," "3:10 to Yuma," "The Magnificent Seven" and "The Prisoner" episode "Living in Harmony" can help inspire the troupe to develop this type of chronicle.

Act I: The Wilderness

Scene One: The Midnight Express



The adventure begins on a passenger car of the Midnight Express. Dark tendrils caress the windows as the train passes through the Tempest. Gas lamps hold the darkness at bay and fill the room with a yellow glow. The decor in the car is based on the early 1880s of the American Southwest. In one corner, a man in buckskins carrying a relic Winchester rifle keeps an eye out for Nephacks in the Void. A Chinese immigrant warily regards a saloon singer in an ostentatious dress. A Buffalo soldier talks with a 12-year-old newsboy about the real value of newspapers from 1884.

The characters are all sitting near a beautiful young wraith named Elizabeth Bradshaw. She's traveling to a small ghost town in Arizona to visit an old friend: the Sheriff of the town. A conversation between the Circle and Ms. Bradshaw is an excellent way to foster a sense of unity and identity in the group if this is a beginning adventure.

Liz is very worried for her safety, and she's impressed enough with the Circle to try to elicit their help.



Elizabeth Bradshaw

Liz grew up in Boston as a member of a wealthy family. She ran away at the age of 16 with a dashing young lawman. Their destination was a sleepy little town called Pumpkin, Arizona. Liz and her young beau felt safe there, and they planned to start a family there... until the arrival of a bandito named Alberto Habenero. Her boyfriend, the Sheriff, ran him out of town, but Liz never really felt safe there again.

Later, the town started to die, and she moved back East. She lived the rest of her life in Boston. Before the turn of the century, Pumpkin became a ghost town. A century later, on the other side, Liz found out that her boyfriend is still in Pumpkin — this time as a Hierarchy representative. Her regret over giving up a life with him has given her the Passion to fight Oblivion.

Demeanor: Caregiver

Nature: Survivor

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 3, Awareness 2, Dodge 3, Empathy 3

Skills: Expression 2, Meditation 2, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Medicine 2, Linguistics (French) 1

Passions: Find her lost love (Love) 3, Support law and order (Pride) 3

Arcanos: Argos 3

Fetters: Home in Boston, 2; The Sheriff, 3

Willpower: 5

Pathos: 5

Angst: 2

Shadow: The Leech. Elizabeth has survived quite well without the protection of her former boyfriend, but her own sense of inadequacy continues to drive her to him.

Thorns: Trick of the Light

Shadow Passions: Find someone else (Fear) 3, Hurt others (Pain) 4

Image: Her outfit is very proper. After all, she's a spokesperson of propriety. Her hair is tied in a neat bun, her boots are immaculately polished, and her dress is always clean, even if it takes Arcanos to keep it that way. Her smile could stop a stampeding buffalo.

Roleplaying Hints: Shift through different gears until you find the method that motivates the Circle best. Liz can maintain a facade of modesty, enabling her to warm the heart of a true gentleman; emote her sense of distress well enough to convey her feelings to an Empathic confidant; or let her hair down while charming the most hardened cynic.

Liz is very proper about introducing herself and finding out all about the Circle before she tells them about her long-lost love and her life in Arizona. She grows nostalgic as she tells her story. Then she gasps as four strangers walk through the door leading to the compartment.

The four gentlemen trail a cloud of black dust behind them. They almost radiate Angst. They stare down the passengers in the car, trying to intimidate anyone who attempts to meet their gaze.

As Elizabeth begins to fade away using Enshroud, she whispers a warning. "Those men! I know who they are! They work for Habenero! Ready your Arcanos, folks, they might be after me!"

Renegade Gunslingers

They came from throughout the Southwest — men and women with contempt for laws that didn't belong on the wild frontier. They lived their lives in defiance of law and order. Now that they've crossed to the other side, the Hierarchy is the only force that opposes their struggle for what they're truly entitled to: freedom

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 2, Awareness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 2

Skills: Firearms 3, Melee 2, Survival 2

Knowledges: Investigation 3

Background: Status (Renegades) 2

Passions: Raise hell (Joy) 4, Destroy the Hierarchy (Pride) 3

Arcanos: Puppetry 3, Moliat 3

Fetters: None

Willpower: 8

Pathos: 5

Angst: 7

Shadow: Varies

Thorns: Varies



Shadow Passions: Kill anything that gets in your way (Pain) 4, Back down from an even fight (Cowardice) 3

Image: Their clothes are soiled from too much time in the Shadowlands of the desert, their hair is unruly from long journeys in the Tempest, and their skin is eternally parched from a former lifetime in the deserts of the Southwest.

Roleplaying Notes: Anywhere you go, you've got a right to be there and a right to damn well act like it. You've got every right to use mortals to go into the Skinlands as well. You're free — free of the constraints of the real world, free of the laws of men and God, and even free from death itself.

A few Perception + Awareness rolls, modified by whatever distractions the characters enact, determine if the gunslingers notice Liz. The characters might wisely avoid a confrontation, offer a distraction, or get a sudden case of testosterone poisoning and attack the Renegades. Only one of the gunslingers needs to make it out of the train car for the purposes of this adventure. As long as one Renegade can find allies, the adventure goes on.

If the characters do nothing, the Renegades generally act hostile to anyone who gets in their way. The Buffalo soldier shows his disdain by slowly loading his relic rifle. An elderly gambler discreetly reaches for a derringer in his boot. No one, however, has the courage to risk a fight. Any sizable confrontation will result in one of the gunslingers stopping the others. "Save it for Pumpkin, men. Save it for Pumpkin. Habenero's going to need our help."

After a suitable quantity of Angst and tension is dispensed, the gunslingers move on to the next car. Elizabeth once again becomes visible.

"I know what those boys are up to. They're gunning for my fiancé, I know it! We've got to warn him! We've got to beat the train to Pumpkin and warn the town!"

Habenero is not yet on the train — he's boarding at a later stop. If the players try to push the Angst level of the scene a bit further and chase the gunslingers through the train, they'll fail to find them. This action will also abandon the lady in distress, possibly jeopardizing their opportunity to be heroes. This would be unwise: Heroism makes for an excellent source of Pathos.





Scene Two: The Tempest

The Argos Arcanos is the best way to get to Pumpkin quickly. If no one else knows it, Liz does. Only the menace of Spectres was sufficient to dissuade her from traveling through the Tempest alone. If the dice are unkind, a fast-flowing current in the Tempest will whisk the characters on to the next scene. Someone has been preparing a route leading to the town...

Sure enough, two Shades are waiting to ambush anyone ready to Argos into Pumpkin (see the **Wraith: the Oblivion** Appendix for more information on Shades). Hopefully, combat will not be necessary.

The Spectres are dressed as prospectors, and a huge skeletal mule laden with pickaxes and other weapons is resting nearby. Anyone suitably observant (or resourceful) notices that the Shades are looking at a map of

Central Arizona. There are arrows around the town of Pumpkin, suggesting some sort of planned troop movements for assaulting the town. The Shades are scouts for an army waiting to attack Pumpkin. Could there be some connection between the Renegades' plans and those of these Shades?

If the characters can outwit or outmaneuver the Shades, fine. If the characters are itching to start a fight, the wounds they incur will penalize them for the rest of the adventure and encourage them to be a little more cautious.

Slipping out of the Tempest and into the town of Pumpkin with Elizabeth's help should be rather straightforward. Elizabeth will be shocked to see what's happened to the Old West. Pumpkin has indeed changed. It's now a tourist trap.



Act II: "Civilization"




elcome to Arizona. Now go home.

— typical anti-tourist bumper sticker

There's a train station at the east end of town. Regular trains don't stop here anymore, but the Midnight Express makes a stop once a month. As the characters reform in the Shadowlands at the end of the street, they see a typical tourist tableau set before them. Two stuntmen face off in the middle of the street. The Sheriff is tall, handsome and blond; the "villain" has a scraggly beard and wears a black hat. A crowd of pale and flabby bodies watches from the sides of the street. Tourists hang expectantly on each word of narration coming from the loudspeakers nearby. After a few lines of dialogue, the stuntmen draw. The hollow sound of blanks echoes across the desert. "Good" triumphs over "evil."

The Skinlands are active with tourists milling about. From the mortal point of view, it's a prosperous town, one where business is good and everyone's having a carefully orchestrated and merchandised good time. The wraiths in the Shadowlands see the town a little differently. They've got a growing sense of contempt for the tourists. To them, the town is a lie. They're bitter about what their town has become, but they won't admit it, and they certainly won't do anything about it. The characters have a chance to do something about that.

From the viewpoint of the wraiths, the town is better off in the Shadowlands than it is in the real world. The decay in the Shadowlands shows the town as it was a hundred years ago. There's another element to the scenery, though. The worst problems in this small Necropolis aren't the peeling of paint or the cracks in the sidewalk. The spirit of the Old West is dying. It's getting further and further away from the world of the living. It's still there, waiting for the land of the Quick to remember it, but it's almost as though it has no place in the world.



Exploring the Town

The local wraiths are clearly ignoring the decay they have to live with, just as most wraiths do. However, they've obviously grown soft as a result of their easy lifestyle for the last century. The characters are going to have to stir up some enthusiasm if they're going to save the town. Give them a chance to explore and meet the local wraiths.

Locations

• Simpson Saloon

This is the most popular hang-out for wraiths. In the Shadowlands, Madame Zarah, the town's scarlet woman, gives performances on the stage three times a day. Performances occur in the Skinlands at the same time. The actors in the world of the living are drama school drop-outs; in the Shadowlands, however, Madame Zarah's talent at Keening usually carries the show. It also provides Pathos for wraiths in the area.

The festivities in the Shadowlands are continuously animated. Sometimes a notable wraith of the Old West will stop by to tell stories. A player piano sits in the corner, and Joe Hill plays it for hours on end. Deputy Bishop will gladly challenge anyone to a game of cards. The saloon isn't as crowded as it used to be, but there's still an atmosphere of camaraderie. The cobwebs in the corners grow larger each year, but the saloon is still the best place for the locals to get together and enjoy their town.

The saloon in the world of the Quick is a bit more dreadful. Cowboy beans and overpriced steaks are the usual fare, along with a noxious substance called "sarsaparilla," which tastes remarkably like root beer. Sawdust covers the floor. There's a long line of tourists anxious to spend their cash, and, as one would expect, they're herded through like cattle.

The saloon does have one interesting tradition: No one is allowed to wear a necktie into the "restaurant." A collection of clipped ties is stapled to one wall. To add to the festive spirit of the restaurant, the town's undertaker has tacked thirteen nooses to the wall as well, commemorating the visits of notorious criminals over the last century.

• Old Fly's Photo Shop

In the Skinlands, tourists often stop by to pose for quick "period" photographs. For 20 bucks, a would-be

desperado can get his picture on a computer-printed "Wanted" poster. The walls are plastered with sample photographs. Most of them are of tourists pretending to be what they're not.

Observant wraiths will notice (with a successful roll of Perception + Investigation) that there are some authentic daguerreotypes mixed in with the photographs. These hidden photos show Pumpkin in its heyday. A man in a formal suit cuts a yellow ribbon and opens the train station. Reverend Ezekial holds a wedding in the town chapel. The saloon is packed during a boisterous party, a family stands outside their new home, two kids play near the stables, and so on.

The most significant picture shows three gunslingers and a mysterious stranger standing in the middle of Main Street. The three men look just like the men the characters met on the train. The engraving on the frame is worn, but a little polishing, using Outrage, reveals a name: Alberto Habenero. (His description is given at the end of this adventure.)

• The Livery Stable

Pony rides are a popular attraction in the Skinlands. Pudgy little kids clutching ice cream bars and cotton candy climb aboard near-exhausted horses and shout things like "Yee-haw!" and "Giddy-up!"

The most frequent dead resident to the stables is a 9-year-old kid known only as "Kid." He's quite willing to run errands... for a price. He's also shockingly accurate with his Artifact Outrage Slingshot.

• The Church

Well, this *was* a church once. Services aren't performed here anymore, so the financiers behind the town didn't want the space to go to waste. Besides, it makes for a charming gift store. There's even a collection plate on top of the cash register. The man behind the collection plate sits faithfully (and sedentarily) at his post for 40 hours a week, hiding his steadily increasing intoxication.

There's a wealth of treasures here: stuffed "jackalopes" with actual horns, prickly pear candy, cap pistols of all varieties, plastic deputy badges made in Hong Kong, cowboy hats designed to fall apart in a week, plastic spurs for jabbing younger siblings, cute little cacti in tiny pots, countless framed posters of "charming Indians," butch-looking Arizona T-shirts adorned with eagles and wolves, New York salsa, wine in cans, Arizona Iced Tea, hastily written Western novels... you get the idea.

Joe Hill can use his Arcanos to bring any of these items into the Shadowlands (if they're really needed). Any characters desiring equipment can get a sizable supply of touristy crap if they can convince Joe to acquire it.

The town priest still lives here, but refuses to come down from the belfry most of the time. Occasionally, he rings the church bell in the Shadowlands to call for a "town meeting."

• Joe's General Store

Mmmmm. Real Western grub. Hot dogs, cola, cotton candy, candy bars, ice cream — makes you feel like you're in an episode of "Bonanza." There are also about ten varieties of Parlboro cigarettes. The display is next to a large poster showing a real Hollywood actor sitting on an actual horse.

Joe's extremely carefree about his life here. As long as he can be near the gluttonous tourists, he's got all the Pathos he needs. Although the snack stand meets all the health code requirements in the Skinlands, the store is an absolute mess in the Shadowlands. It's evident that Joe hasn't cleaned up here in a long time. He seems quite content to let entropy slowly win.

• Sheriff's Office

Anyone who's seen enough TV sitcoms knows what visitors want to see here. Tourists step inside the jail cell, point at the guns hanging on the wall, take lots of photographs and completely ignore Michael Bishop, the wraith deputy who sleeps in the Sheriff's chair. A pair of rusty six-shooters in cracked leather holsters hangs on the wall. There's a safe behind Deputy Bishop containing 30 oboli in a Stygian-metal box. Only the Sheriff knows the combination.

When the characters meet the Deputy, he'll have some advice for them. See **Meeting the Deputy** in Act III.

• Main Street

On Main Street in front of the saloon, Señor Habenero gunned down ten victims. The area is still a level two Haunt. To commercialize on... er, commemorate the event, two stuntmen have a staged gunfight at noon and dawn. One dresses as the former Sheriff, and the other is dressed as Habenero. This should be one of the first things the characters notice.

The scenic storefronts of Pumpkin once led to a magnificent vista of the Arizona desert. Main Street now leads to a parking lot. The ten gunslingers killed by Alberto Habenero are buried under it.

The "Civilized"

While witnessing the state of the town, the characters have a chance to talk to the local wraiths. Elizabeth indignantly warns everyone about the attack. Unfortunately, she's so hysterical and confrontational that she completely fails to convince anyone.

The wraiths of Pumpkin are detailed below, along with their perspectives on current events. They're willing to listen to reason, but the characters should have to work hard if they really want some allies.

Madame Zarah

Zarah made a life for herself in the West while fighting for her freedom every step of the way. Every choice she made was hers, and she knows the importance of looking out for herself first. Unfortunately, her hard-headed nature continually got her into trouble, right up to the day she was shot by a jealous ex-lover.

Nature: Survivor

Demeanor: Conniver

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 2, Brawl 1, Dodge 2

Skills: Etiquette 3, Firearms 3, Performance 4, Survival 1

Knowledges: Investigation 3, Linguistics 2, Medicine 2



Backgrounds: Eidolon 3, Memorium 2, Wealth 1
Passions: Impress an audience (Pride) 3, Chastity (Faith) 4
Arcanos: Keening 3
Fetters: Center stage in the Saloon, 3; An old derringer pistol, 3
Willpower: 6
Pathos: 5
Angst: 4

Shadow: The Rationalist. She can justify anything if her survival is at stake.

Thorns: Bad Luck

Shadow Passions: Taunt the gullible (Lust) 3

Image: A "Rubenesque" buxom brunette. Zarah loves to use the Arcanos Moliarte to change her costumes from show to show. Most of them sparkle from a side-effect of her art.

Roleplaying Hints: Flirt. Your livelihood depends on your ability to draw people to you. Even around the ladies in town, you still wear your sensuality like a new dress from Frisco.

Madame Zarah is no slouch. She's shrewd. She's resourceful. She also happens to be the second-best shot in town. Unfortunately, she places her own survival above anything else.

The Kid

His parents never really cared much what he did. They were far too busy working to try to get by. The Kid learned quickly how to make a profit, and his parents, desperate for his support, never wondered too much where the money came from.

Nature: Child

Demeanor: Conniver

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Awareness 2

Skills: Dodge 3, Firearms (Slingshot) 4, Stealth 3

Knowledge: Investigation 3

Backgrounds: Wealth 1, Contacts 2, Allies 1

Passions: Make a quick buck (Greed) 3, Help strangers (Trust) 4

Arcanos: Argos 3

Fetters: Grave, 3; Red wagon, 3

Willpower: 4



Pathos: 5

Angst: 2

Shadow: The Pusher. Sometimes you have to take a few extra chances to make a deal.

Thorns: Tainted Touch

Shadow Passions: Drive others to Oblivion (Pain) 3, Join the Renegades (Fear) 4

Image: A little over five feet tall with freckles and an unrelenting cowlick. He's always got a mischievous grin because he's always up to something.

Roleplaying Hints: Anyone is fair game for a scam. Any conversation is a chance to turn a quick profit, whether for oboli or favors.

Artifact: Outrage Slingshot. This works just like a slingshot except that it's used in the Shadowlands to create distractions in the Skinlands. It will also do one die of damage in the Skinlands for each point of Pathos invested in a shot (up to four dice).

Reverend Ezekial

Ezekial led a sinful life in Boston. No one remembers his life as an exploitative rake. He was sure he'd find redemption in the purifying heat of the desert. He did... for his Psyche, at least. His Shadow holds a dark secret.



Ezekial was killed after a tryst with Madame Zarah. The jealous ex-lover who shot them both has since passed into Oblivion, so only the two of them know of their sin.

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Judge

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 3, Awareness 3, Expression 3

Skills: Leadership 1, Survival 2

Knowledges: Occult 2

Backgrounds: Status (Heretics) 1, Notoriety 1, Eidolon 2

Passions: Find the sinners in town (Lust) 3, Oppose Heretics (Faith) 3

Arcanos: Castigate 3, Fatalism 3

Fetters: Pulpit, 3; Bible, 2; A room upstairs in the saloon, 2

Willpower: 2

Pathos: 5

Angst: 1

Shadow: The Leech. Ezekial frequently spoke of the sins of the flesh. This was often to assist in his denial of his own weak-willed nature.

Thorns: Shadow Life, Doppelganger. Madame Zarah still has a mysterious paramour...

Shadow Passions: Allow the church to die (Pain) 3, Leave Madame Zarah (Fear) 4

Image: Wild eyes, wild hair, and a continually bubbling aura of paranoid energy. He always acts like a Maelstrom or the Apocalypse will come any minute.

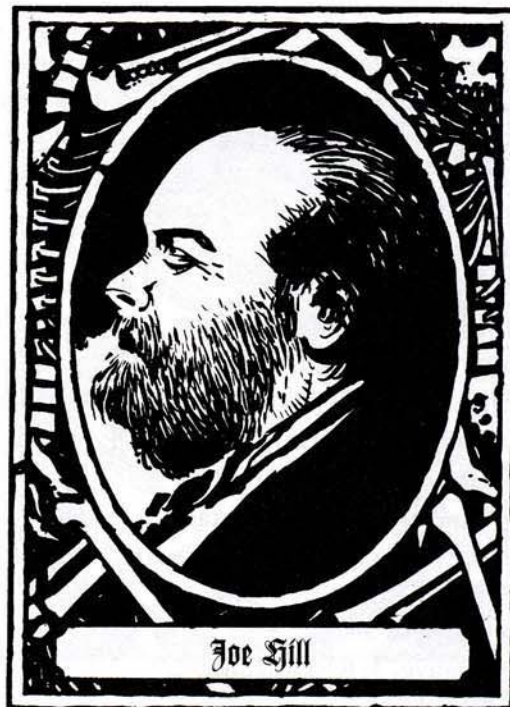
Roleplaying Hints: Rant and rave. (Christopher Lloyd as Reverend Jim on "Taxi" is a good model.) Only an emergency will draw you down from the belfry. Then again, you think of just about anything as a potential emergency.

Joe Hill

Joe lived a simple life. He kept his general store well-stocked, and he reveled in the saloon in the evening. He's always been incompetent, but no one faults him. He's too good-natured to hate.

Most of the townspeople don't know about his past. Joe moved out West because of a series of robberies he committed back East. He kept running until he met someone who could forgive him, and he settled down in a place he thought no one would find him. Joe and his wife had a peaceful life in Pumpkin, right up to the day she was killed. After that, he spent his days working in the General Store and his nights drinking in the saloon.

There was a time when Joe cared very deeply about his lost wife. Now he's trying to forget about her, and he's slipping closer to Oblivion because of it.



Nature: Martyr

Demeanor: Loner

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 3

Skills: Performance (Piano) 3, Etiquette 2

Knowledges: Finance 3

Backgrounds: Wealth 3, Contacts 2

Passions: Eat, drink and be merry (Lust) 3, Avenge the death of his wife (Love) 4

Arcanos: Outrage 2, Inhabit 4

Fetters: General Store, 4; Bottle of poison, 3

Willpower: 3

Pathos: 5

Angst: 3

Shadow: The Abuser. Joe's always been good to himself. Maybe he should feel guilty for that. Maybe he should punish himself for his lack of self-control.

Thorns: Pact of Doom

Shadow Passions: Steal from the living (Greed) 4, Let his friends suffer (Pain) 3

Image: Very rotund and sedentary. Joe is... well, jovial, but he's dangerous when he's angry. His cheerful exterior and happy-go-lucky nature get a little strained sometimes.

Roleplaying Hints: Nothing's going to upset you. You've got it easy here. Why worry? If the town's going to die, there might as well be a big party before it happens.

Mrs. McCaffee

It is such a pity that her husband died. Edmus and Edna would often talk long into the night about the troubles he had at work at a cemetery in Chicago. He saved for decades so that they could go on a trip to Europe. Then he died, and Mrs. McCaffee sank into despair. She only knew of one skill she could use to make her living. She had to... the opiates she used to escape her grief became more and more addictive and expensive.

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Deviant

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Awareness 3

Skills: Brawl 1, Dodge 1, Stealth 4



Knowledges: Medicine 2, Science (Mortuary Science) 3

Backgrounds: Notoriety 1, Wealth 1, Contacts 1

Passions: Spread gloom (Despair) 3, Warn the living of death (Fear) 3

Arcanos: Phantasm 3, Pandemonium 2

Fetters: Opium, 4; Undertaker's office, 3

Willpower: 7

Pathos: 7

Angst: 6

Shadow: Parent. Edmus kept her so safe. She had such a lovely life in her gilded cage. Maybe she should go back to that sane, normal life.

Thorns: Shadow Life. Edna harvests Pathos by bringing nightmares to tourists in the Holiday Six.

Shadow Passions: Kill the living (Resentment) 4, Disturb graves (Fear) 3

Image: Six feet of gloom and doom. She's usually dressed in flowing black gowns and is stylish enough to put an Edward Gorey drawing to shame. She always walks with lumbering strides. McCaffee knows she's intimidating, especially since most of the men in the town distrust such an independent woman. She likes it that way. The word "Gothic" should be painted on her forehead in big neon letters.

Roleplaying Hints: Try for sinister and malevolent instead of comically foreboding. McCaffee is perfect for

warning the characters that Oblivion is on the way. If things get bad, she'll really want to take the Midnight Express out of town.

Deputy Bishop

The Sheriff was such a hero. The Deputy hardly had to work at all. Bishop had a nice, relaxing life, and has a nice relaxing afterlife, as well.

Nature: Conniver

Demeanor: Conformist

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 3

Skills: Drive (Ride Horse) 2, Firearms 3, Leadership 1, Investigation 2

Knowledges: Law 2

Backgrounds: Hierarchy 1

Passions: Protect the town (Duty) 1, Avoid danger (Cowardice) 4

Arcanos: Moliate 3

Fetters: Chair in the office, 3; Front porch of the office, 3

Willpower: 3

Pathos: 6

Angst: 2

Shadow: The Martyr. If hard-pressed, Deputy Bishop might actually do something heroic.

Thorn: Doppelganger. Deputy Bishop really wishes he could be more like the Sheriff. If all else fails, he'll play the hero as part of a suicide strike against the Renegades. If he does it, he'll destroy himself for the good of the town.

Shadow Passions: Court danger (Pride) 4, Sacrifice for the good of others (Pain) 3

Image: Blond, muscular, manly and brave. Well, three out of four, at least. Bishop's been kicking back for the last century, so he always looks like he's going to respond to any imminent disaster with the word "So?"

Roleplaying Hints: Nothing fazes you. You've hung around the Hollywood version of the Old West so long that you've kind of grown into the part. As long as your hair's in place and you stand tall and proud, you've got the situation under control. This hides the fact that you're really a coward. The solution to any problem is obvious: Avoid all danger.



Points of View

Each wraith has an opinion on how to handle the threat to the town. The locals need to be persuaded, but they can eventually be swayed if the characters are diligent.

Madame Zarah: Honey, if the Renegades want the town, they can have it. I don't care who's in charge, as long as I'm alive. Fighting the Renegades ain't my idea of staying alive.

The Kid: Me? Fight Renegades? I'm just a kid, ma'am! Ya gotta help us! Now, if you want me to help you, I can act as your messenger or something... what ya got on ya?

Reverend Ezekial: This is still the Lord's town, and he will protect us. Clearly He has brought you here. Clearly you are our protectors.

Joe Hill: Well, the Sheriff always took care of these things before. He's got to be Slumbering around here somewhere. I wouldn't worry about it.

Mrs. McCaffey: Nothin' we can do about it. Oblivion's coming. I'm planning on taking the Midnight Express out of here.

Deputy Bishop: Don't worry, we can take care of this, especially if you fine wraiths help out. They wouldn't dare take over a Hierarchy stronghold like this. We've been safe here for a century, right? We can take care of it.

Act III: Acting Civilized



After a number of scenes in which the characters meet the local wraiths, the characters should have a good idea of their chances for saving the town. Two events will probably influence how they decide to handle the situation: their encounter with Pumpkin's Deputy and a town meeting that night.

Scene One: Meeting the Deputy

If the characters decide not to wake up the Deputy in Act II, he'll find them after they've had a chance to explore the town. If they do wake him up, his reaction will be pretty much the same. The Deputy is overjoyed to see new wraiths in town and gladly encourages them to stay a while. Pumpkin's a nice place to stay, after all, nice and quiet. The Hierarchy's kept the town safe for a long time. Their Circle can stay here as long as it wants.

The Deputy also has an offer for them. They might want to have an edge if it comes down to a fight. Even if they'd just like to kick back in Pumpkin for a while, he'll gladly make them honorary deputies. He's got a few tin stars in his drawer to take out and show the Circle. Working for the Hierarchy's not that bad. And there are a few benefits to the job...

The characters will also probably ask about the location of the Sheriff. After all, the train will be coming into town soon. The Deputy hasn't seen him in about three years. Most of the wraiths have the attitude that he's "around here somewhere" and that he'll "show up when he's needed."

In fact, they seem to have taken the benefits of Hierarchy protection for granted. They've just assumed that when trouble arrived, the Hierarchy would be there to help them. Obviously, the citizens of the town took the Sheriff for granted for so long that when he left, no one noticed. Now they'll have to reexamine their relationship with the Hierarchy.

Where's the Sheriff?

Oddly enough, no one's seen the Sheriff since the town became a tourist trap. Everyone describes him in vague terms. He's about six foot with a lantern jaw and

Artifact: Tin Star

This device was used by Hierarchy sheriffs and deputies throughout the Old West. Wearing it gives a wraith one level of armor from a variant of the Moliata Arcanos. Anyone using a Tin Star gains an additional Passion: "Serve and Protect (Duty) 4." Anyone pinning on the Star will feel the Passion immediately. The Pathos generated through this will help fuel another art of Moliation: the ability to form a relic six-shooter. The gun will fire Soulfire, inflicting four damage dice. Each shot requires one point of Pathos.

a steel-eyed look. No one can remember the color of his eyes, his hair or even what he sounded like.

The Storm

Sooner or later, one of the characters will probably advocate going to the Hierarchy for help. After all, it's their job to deal with Renegades, right? They might be tempted to just walk away and let the town fall into utter chaos. Who cares if the Renegades get another stronghold? Who cares if the Code of Charon is violated?

This problem could present a chance to drive home part of the theme of the adventure. The wraiths who reside here have allowed their Necropolis to fall apart after being dependent on the Hierarchy for so long. They're resentful, saying that the Hierarchy has failed, but now it's too late. The characters might see the same attitudes developing in themselves, possibly including contempt for the Hierarchy.

Running to someone else won't solve the problem. The town priest will have a vision, if necessary. He'll see a storm heading to the town through the Tempest. Soon, traveling into or out of the town by Argos will be far more difficult (increase the difficulty for traveling through the Tempest by 3 when the storm hits).

Scene Two: The Town Meeting

Once characters have had a chance to scope out the town and talk to the citizens and the Deputy, it should be obvious to everyone that they've at least caused a bit of concern. Don't allow any of the locals to volunteer help unless the characters have been spec-

tacularly persuasive. Even if the characters haven't met the good Reverend, he'll wrap up the third act of the adventure by ringing the bell in the church like a Hierarchy gong. This should happen around 10 p.m.

The wraiths in town gather in the church (well, the gift shop, at least) to allow the characters one big chance to say their piece. It should begin to dawn on the citizens, even if the characters don't prompt them, that the Hierarchy might not be coming to save them. They're going to have to find their own solution. Several options are available to the townspeople.

- **Leave Town on the Midnight Express**

This option should come up recurrently throughout conversations with the characters. The train offers them the freedom to go anywhere in the world. Maybe they've been in Pumpkin too long. Maybe they should just pack up their troubles and run for it.

Any character who hears this while wearing a Tin Star should feel a tinge of guilt. If the characters don't disagree with this argument, the Deputy, who's still wearing his badge, will. Leaving the town to the Renegades could result in disaster. They'd have the freedom to Skinride any of the mortals in town, and the safety of all the wraiths in the Southwest would be threatened.

Despite this, Edna repeats this argument throughout the rest of the evening. She loves to go on about the Midnight Express.

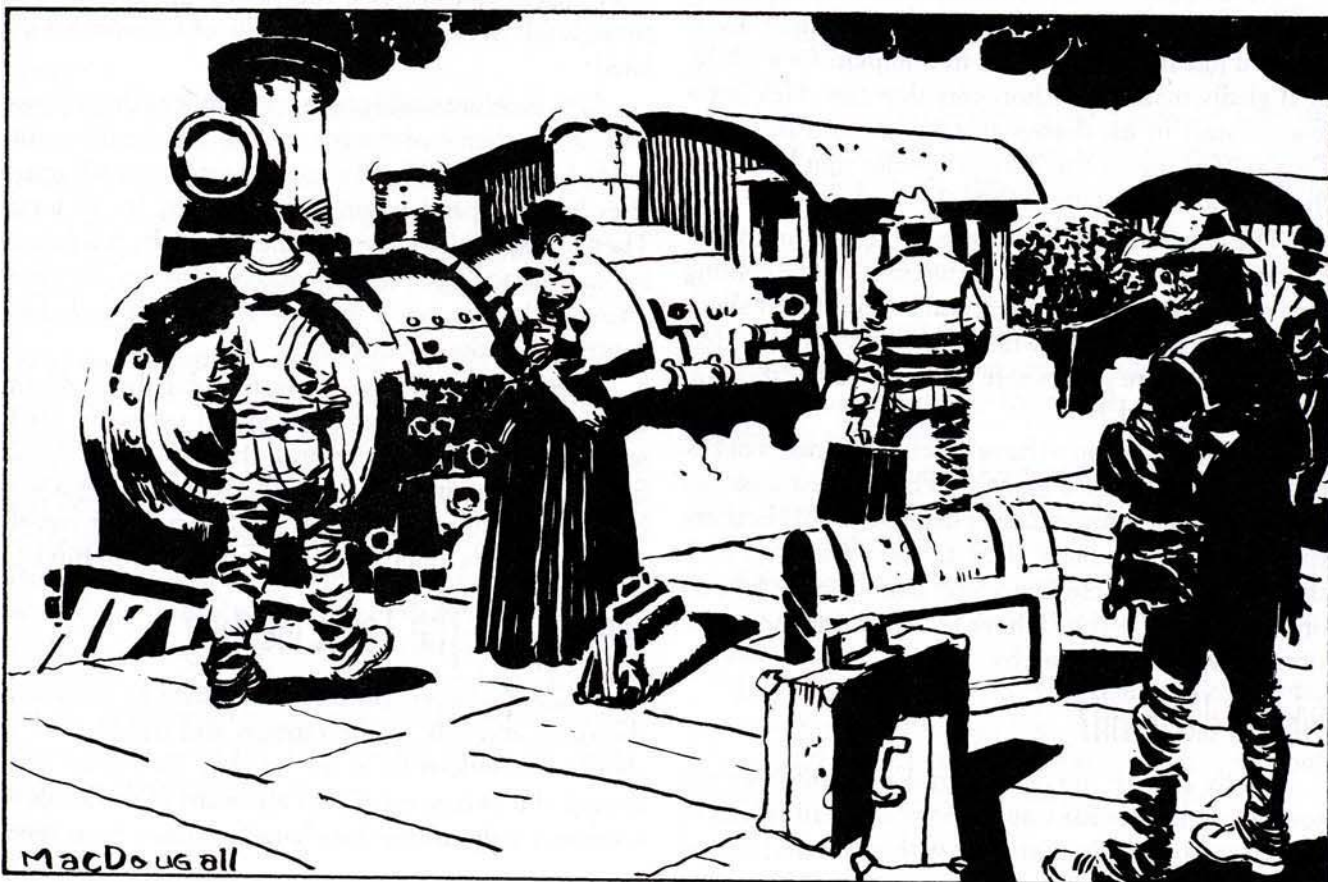
If the Circle chooses this option, they may decide that the concept of "honor" is a lie, and that the idea of having a sense of duty to other wraiths is a dangerous and foolish choice.


- **Give the Town to the Renegades**

For some of the locals, this is actually a tempting option. Who says the Renegades won't take care of the town better than the Hierarchy? They'd certainly be able to directly change the town. Why is the Hierarchy better than a gang of Renegades? Maybe if the citizens of Pumpkin knew how to use a little Puppetry, the Old West could return to the Skinlands.

The Kid acts naive as he asks questions about "why the Renegades are so bad." Even the Kid doesn't know that his Shadow is driving him toward them.

It's possible that the Circle might agree with this option and decide to take the Renegades' point of view. They might even think it's more valid than the philosophy of the Hierarchy. If the players decide to go along this route, the ending to the adventure is a little different, but still possible.





If the Circle chooses this option, they may decide that although the standard definition of "honor" is wrong, they still have a duty to help the town find new allies. Perhaps they feel that the rights of wraiths are more important than the rights of mortals.

- **Fight the Renegades**

Maybe the townspeople can put up a fight. After all, they've got skills, don't they? Maybe they'd be outgunned, but it's noble to die for what you believe in, isn't it?

Training the townspeople to defend the town would make for a typical Western ending. If the players have a taste for the tragic, the Circle might decide to organize resistance. The townsfolk, though, might find the next option a bit more acceptable.

If the Circle chooses this option, they're clearly placing a high value on honor by trying to instill it in the townspeople, although the actual duty of defending the town — as well as the price of failure — is left primarily to the locals.

- **Convince the Characters to Fight for Them**

This argument will be easier to advance if the characters took the bait and are wearing Tin Stars. Even if they are, it should be clear that the Renegades don't care about the tourists, the townspeople or even the characters. In fact, if the characters run for it and any townspeople stay behind, they'll gladly tell about the Circle escaping to warn the Hierarchy, in an effort to bargain for their lives.

If the Circle chooses this option, they've defined their group as having high standards of honor and duty by risking themselves for others and taking responsibility for the safety of the town.

The characters will also have to define their feelings about the Renegades and the Hierarchy. The local wraiths feel a bit of resentment toward the Hierarchy. It's subtle, but it's there. The wraiths blame them for allowing things in the town to fall apart, but at the same time, they're bitter that they haven't left someone like the Sheriff here to defend the town. The Hierarchy's failed, not them. Certainly not them. There's also a chance that the characters might side with the Renegades in the end. That won't stop the adventure. They'll have a chance to see what the Renegades will do to the town.

If Elizabeth has brought them this far into the adventure, she'll be even more persuasive now. She fervently believes that the Sheriff will return and that he'll

be in danger. She ardently argues for the characters to find him. Any character who offers to help Elizabeth might be eligible for Pathos if he's been motivated to help her through this adventure.

Act IV: The Uncivilized



edges? We don't need badges...

— "Treasure of the Sierra Madre"

Two of the Renegade gunslingers come into town at around 10:30 that evening. Of course, they have an obligation to scout out the town for Habenero. The temptation to Skinride some tourists is a little too great for them.

The two men seek out two mortals to use as Consorts, and over the course of half an hour, they Attenuate themselves to their new mounts. The characters may witness some tourists acting very strangely...

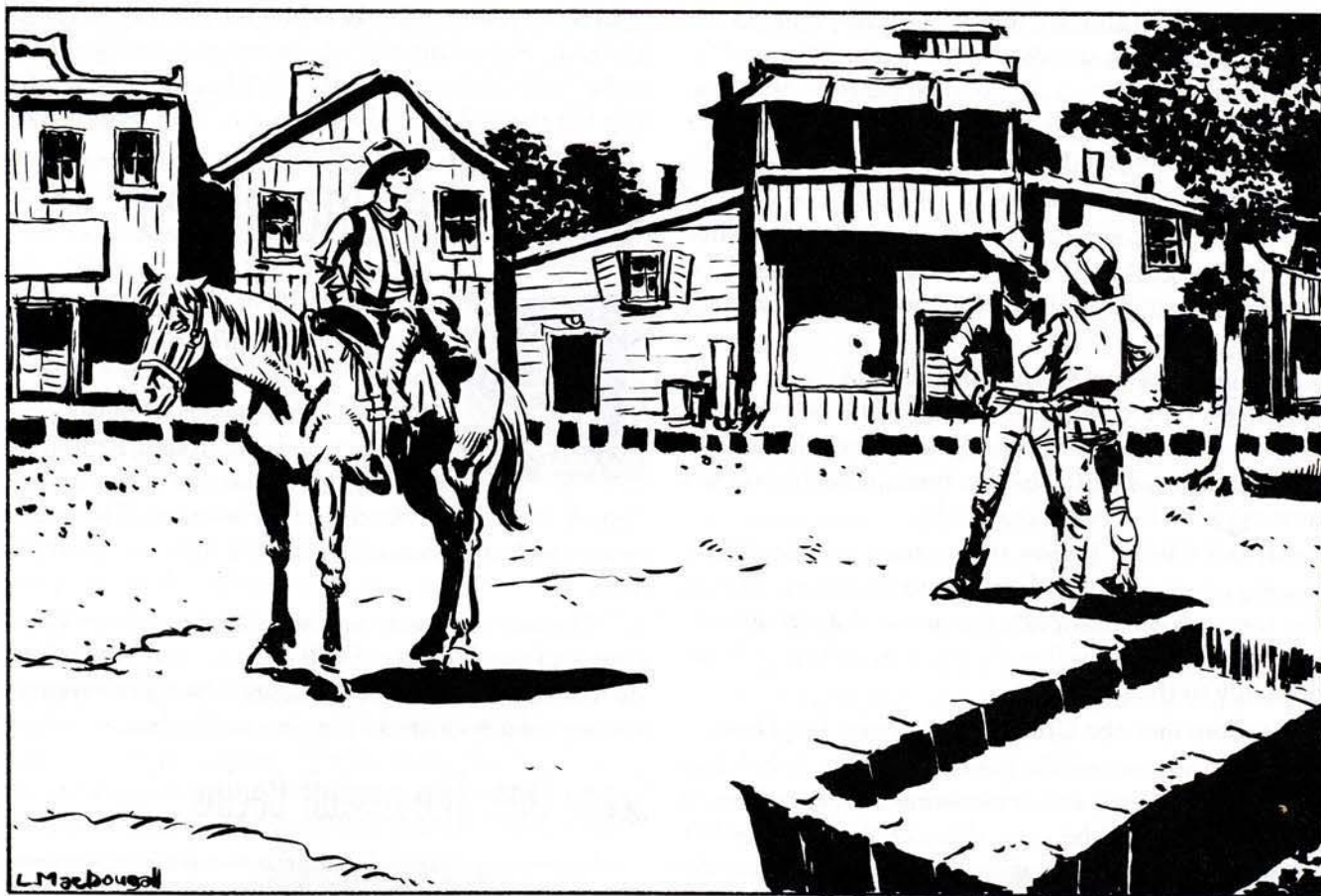
Scene One: The Assault Begins

Harvesting fear and pain, the two gunslingers rampage throughout the hotel. The characters probably won't find out about this until a fire starts in the hotel. People run in the streets screaming. A wind comes sweeping through the desert, threatening to spread the flames, and the sound of a fire engine is heard in the distance.

This is an excellent time for Shadowguides to strike. Any characters who are close to Catharsis will have a chance to harvest fear, pain, lust or any number of dark emotions.

This scene is rather straightforward. If the characters weren't motivated to fight the Renegades before, they probably will be now. There is, however, the definite possibility that they might feel caught in the middle. After all, the rampant disrespect for Pumpkin in the Skinlands is part of the trouble with the town. The Renegades' point of view might become evident. For wraiths, maintaining a sense of balance between contempt for the intrusion of mortals into their domain and acknowledging the need they have to keep ties to the real world can be a difficult task.

The argument against the Renegades should also be apparent. If the Renegades take over the town, chaos



will erupt in the streets. The Fog will kick in, and people throughout the town will act as though there is a supernatural disturbance in the town. If investigation were to result from this, the secrecy of wraiths everywhere would be compromised.

Once the characters confront the gunslingers, one of the Renegades issues a challenge:

This town is ours! Señor Habenero's coming! Get out of town, or he'll gun you down in the street! High Moon is coming... High Moon is coming...

The Renegades will not fight to disincorporation. They know they're going to have to save their strength. If they start to lose the fight, they hide out until midnight.

Any characters trying to leave through the Tempest encounter a raging storm. It's not the Sixth Maelstrom, but any wraith attempting to travel through it will take three dice of damage.

The moon is full, and at midnight, it will be directly overhead. It's High Moon. Storytellers who have any Western soundtrack CDs (such as Hugo Montenegro's excellent soundtracks for many of the Clint Eastwood films) would be advised to start playing them now.

Act V: The Gunfight



*Do not forsake me, oh my darling,
I told you on the day we wed
That I could never leave my duty
Until I saw Frank Miller dead.*

— Theme to "High Noon"

...while the 3:10 to Yuma echoes

that sad refrain.

Take that train...

— Theme from "3:10 to Yuma"

The sound of a train whistle echoes through the Shadowlands. The Midnight Express is coming. The tourists have fled for safety, and even in the Dark Umbra, wraiths bar doors and windows. The horses in the stables nearby panic as they sense an unnatural presence, and moonlight shines on the Haunt on Main Street. Some of the wraiths in town might be waiting on the platform for the train, unless the Circle has done its job.



Scene One: The Confrontation

The characters better get a strategy together... *fast*. The map of the town will give them some basic ideas of how to handle the situation. Spreading out a combat map or setting up miniatures should give Storytellers with a taste for down-and-dirty combat scenes an edge in running the finale.

There are several ways to resolve the final act of this drama. If you're running this game for a regular group, you may already know which ones to prepare.

- **Fight to the Bitter End:** This is the simple-minded solution, even if it is a gratifying one. For Storytellers using a combat map, guidelines for combining miniatures with the Storyteller combat rules are included in **Werewolf Second Edition**. The fight itself can be anything from a straight-up "Gunfight at the O.K. Corral" shoot-em-up to a complex scenario that pushes the firearms rules to the limit, complete with obstacles and possible Renegade tricks planned ahead of time. **Wraith** isn't primarily a combat game, however, so other solutions are possible.

- **The Facedown:** A dramatic showdown is another possibility, especially if the troupe's Shadowguides are in top form. This can also be used as a prelude to a fight, if necessary. The Expression Ability is perfect for making a dramatic speech; adjust the difficulty of the roll if the spokesperson for the Circle is particularly eloquent. If the Circle wants to intimidate the Renegades out of town, the Shadowguides may be able to lend enough Angst to make the characters truly frightening... for a price, of course.

- **Solidarity:** This is a difficult resolution to achieve. If the Circle can convince most of the wraiths in town to stand up for their home (instead of leaving on the Midnight Express), the Renegades might realize that the battle will be harder than they thought.

- **Artistry:** A show of force or terror might be sufficient. A use of Pandemonium to show that the town will not die under the reign of the Renegades, or a manifestation of Outrage to strike fear into Renegades riding Consorts are two options.

- **Exposing Habenero:** There's also a chance the Circle will see Habenero for what he really is...

The Sheriff

After a while, it seemed like the town of Pumpkin didn't need him anymore. Maybe they didn't want him

Provisions for Ingenious Players: Back on the Midnight Express

There is the possibility the characters have set up a way to keep tabs on what's happening on the train. For instance, if a wraith with the Lifeweb Arcanos was able to manipulate a Fetter into staying on the train (not an easy task, especially since wraiths don't usually "carry" Fetters), it might be possible to watch what happens there while the characters are in Pumpkin.

Regardless of whether the characters know, it's essential that the Storyteller knows. Habenero is, in fact, on the train by this time, and he has sent two of his gunslingers ahead to act as scouts. While the town meeting is taking place, two gunslingers are traveling through the Tempest. They're worried about having to deal with Spectres, but Habenero has made provisions for that.

An intelligent group of players will also wonder why there were Spectre scouts outside the town. The answer is simple. Habenero isn't really a Renegade. He's just using them. Habenero is a Doppelganger who wants to consign the town to Oblivion.

any more. Law was something they just took for granted; it was something that other people enforced. Sometimes, they even resented it. When the town went soft, ideals of heroism were forgotten.

The Sheriff went into Slumber. The two most useful items in his life were his guns and his badge. The badge is worn by the stuntman who portrays him in the town's little morality play. (He lives in a trailer a few miles from the town.) The guns, when the Sheriff is Slumbering, still hang, worn and rusty, in the Sheriff's office.

He knew the time would come when he would be needed again. That's why he's been converting the Pathos he gains from Memoriam to his Lifeweb Arcanos. If anyone wears the Sheriff's guns or badge in the middle of the Haunt, he'll know someone wants him back again. If anyone wears either item while facing Habenero, the Sheriff will come to that wraith's aid.

Nature: Conformist

Demeanor: Traditionalist

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4



The Sheriff

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4
Talents: Alertness 3, Awareness 3
Skills: Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Firearms 4, Melee 3, Investigation 2
Knowledges: Law 3
Backgrounds: Status (Hierarchy) 3, Memoriam 4
Passions: Serve and protect (Duty) 5, Fight the Renegades (Pride) 3
Arcanos: Moliare 4, Argos 2, Usury 2, Embody 4, Lifeweb 3
Fetters: Six-shooter, 4; Badge, 4
Willpower: 8
Pathos: 10
Angst: 3
Shadow: Perfectionist. The Sheriff never really felt like he was good enough for the job, so he was tempted to leave for quite some time.
Thorns: Bad Luck
Shadow Passions: Fail in the performance of duties (Pain) 3, Let the town die (Hate) 3
Image: 6' 4", dark hair, lantern jaw and a stare that can strike fear into the hearts of the cowardly.
Roleplaying Hints: Larger than life and meaner than death. He is justice personified.

Alberto Habenero

Habenero always resented people who had things easy. His life never was. The only time he really felt safe was when he had a gang backing him up. Unfortunately, that wasn't enough when he took on the town of Pumpkin.

After he died, he desperately wanted revenge. Corraling a Gang of desperadoes was easy, but he still wasn't confident enough in his strength. That's when he was recruited by the Spectres.

Now he'll use anyone and anything to destroy the town and be united with Oblivion.

Nature: Bravo

Demeanor: Rebel

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Brawl 5, Dodge 3, Intimidation 4, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Firearms 4, Leadership 4, Melee 4, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 2, Investigation 2, Linguistics (Spanish) 1, Medicine 1

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Contacts 2, Memoriam 3, Wealth 1

Passions: Get revenge against the town (Vengeance) 5, Serve Oblivion (Fear) 4

Arcanos: Argos 5, Embody 3, Inhabit 3, Moliare 3, Outrage 2

Fetters: Parking lot (where ten bodies are buried), 4; Winchester rifle, 3

Willpower: 8

Pathos: 9

Angst: 10

Shadow: Director. Habenero has wanted to release himself from his own pain for a hundred years. He doesn't fully realize the destruction he will unleash.

Thorns: Bad Luck

Shadow Passions: Lose to the Sheriff (Pain) 5, Show mercy (Compassion) 4

Image: Tall, dark and nasty. Habenero has long hair and a dark beard with silver streaks. His clothes are dirty, and scorch marks from the Tempest have ripped gouges in his flesh.

Roleplaying Hints: The town is a thing of the past. The fact that it still exists is a reminder that your life

was a failure. The tourists mock what your life once meant to you. The Old West is dead. Now the wraiths of the Old West must die as well.

Unfortunately for Habenero, the storm in the Tempest prevents his army of Spectres from attacking. He's got a few hired guns to back him up, but they can be intimidated out of helping him. An eloquent speaker could even convince them that none of the factions will benefit from this fight. If Habenero has his way, the only side that will win is Oblivion.

Castigate can be used to uncover his dark secrets, and the Coax art can be used to keep him out of specific locations.

- **Betray the Town:** What if the characters decide to help the Renegades? There may be a few Renegade spies — or sympathizers — hiding in the Circle. That's fine. The storm in the Tempest stops and Spectres Embodiment in the streets, attacking everything in their path. Habenero reveals his true nature and kills the Deputy. There's a chance that the Renegades could solve the problem better than the Hierarchy. If that's the case, the town could undergo some *really* drastic changes. There's still a confrontation, but it's got to be with the servants of Oblivion.

- **Draw!** Of course, Habenero and the Sheriff never really did have that showdown. If your troupe is used to playing a low-combat game and would like to give this solution a try, have one of the players play the Sheriff

for the purposes of the gunfight. A simple Dexterity + Firearms roll determines who fires first. It's more dramatic, however, if one of the characters in the Circle tries to face Habenero in "single combat." If anyone does this while wearing a Tin Star, adjust his Pathos roll for the scene to a difficulty of 4.

As the Midnight Express waits at the station, the fate of the town is decided. Some of the citizens of Pumpkin might be waiting at the station to discover the outcome. Meanwhile, panic erupts in the Skinlands as a result of the disturbance. How you resolve the situation and which scene you use to do it is up to you and your players.

Scene Two: Denouement

Anyone mortal who was present that night in Pumpkin, Arizona is probably going to have a wild story to tell. The Fog will take effect, and many travelers will forget what really happened. The rest of the story will no doubt become another folk legend.

That could mean one of two things: The financiers might try to play up the whole "ghost town" angle and harass the local wraiths, or they might be convinced to not do business in such a dangerous place. The wraiths have a chance to fight for their town. What kind of place do they want it to be? Do the characters want to play a part in it?

The Midnight Express leaves the station after the confrontation is over. If the characters were en route to another destination, they'll have a chance to get back on board. As long as they followed through with their plans, the citizens of Pumpkin are staying.

Of course, there might also be the need to escort some Renegades to justice. The Hierarchy would pay dearly for such notable criminals. If the Sheriff is present, he'll gladly give them their reward for helping capture them. He can lock the Renegades up in the jail and give the Circle the oboli contained in his safe. If the characters are planning on boarding the train, they'll have to turn in their Tin Stars before they go. Despite that, they're welcome to come back and wear them again. This could become more than just a stop on their train ride.

And there's always the possibility of coming back. Making the trip back to Pumpkin, Arizona is quite easy. All it takes is a ride on the Midnight Express.







Midnight Run

A little rebellion now and then is a good thing.

— Thomas Jefferson

The Renegades are constantly working to overthrow the Hierarchy, which becomes more and more authoritarian with each passing day. Though the Renegades are fractious, and tend to war on each other nearly as much as they do the Hierarchy, they all stand on common ground. Sometimes, if the need is urgent enough, the different factions may work together, and it is these moments that the Hierarchy fears the most.

Thus, when several Renegade groups cooperate together to bring down a Hierarchy Citadel, the Hierarchy will bring everything it can to bear down upon these anarchists. Yet, the Hierarchy has more enemies than just the Renegades, and those who fight against them may find themselves allied with the most unlikely individuals.

This story is divided into three scenes, and is designed to be run in just one session, though the Storyteller could easily embellish the story, stretching it out over several sessions. It is meant to be played by two or more wraiths who have, at the very least, some

Renegade contacts, though it is preferable if the characters actively support the Renegades. About the only characters who would not be appropriate are those who are staunchly Hierarchy. The story can begin in any East Coast city, though it is possible to modify it to take place anywhere the Storyteller's chronicle is set.

The story begins when the characters are contacted by someone they know who is affiliated with the Renegades. He asks them to perform an urgent task for them, one which is vitally important. Hopefully, the characters accept the task, at which point they find themselves involved in a double-cross on the Midnight Express, which quickly leads into a hunt and chase all throughout the train, with the characters first as the hunters and then as the hunted. This story allows the characters to interact with many of the personalities on board the train as well as giving them a brief introduction to many of its cars, and offers much leeway for the Storyteller to create her own cars.



Theme

The theme of this story is a very basic us vs. them, though not necessarily good vs. evil. Each character may have his own perspective on the Hierarchy. If the characters are actually sympathetic to the Hierarchy, they may even choose to return the stolen objects, if they discover what they are.

Mood

The first part of **Midnight Run** may require the characters to do a lot of investigation as they hunt down the impostor. This will rapidly change to pursuit and action as the characters finally discover the impostor and become the hunted. The characters will have to remain one step ahead of the Hierarchy, who are in pursuit of them, if they want to succeed in their mission. Phillips' death should also play a part in the story, imparting a sense of danger and urgency to the characters.

The Plot

Scene One: The characters are contacted by a Renegade source of theirs who begs them to perform an urgent mission for her. They are to board the Midnight Express when it arrives in one hour, and give a small valise to a man named Phillips. They are then supposed to simply get off at the next stop, or ride the train back to their point of origin, whichever they decide. They arrive at the train just in time, and discover a large Hierarchy presence. However, after dodging the Hierarchy goons, they easily find Phillips and hand the case off to him without a hitch.

Scene Two: Just as the characters are beginning to relax a bit, they learn that they have been deceived. The real Phillips had been waylaid en route, and they have given the case to the wrong Phillips. Apparently, whoever took his place used Moliarte to copy Phillips' appearance and dupe the characters. However, the characters suspect that the culprit is still on board the train, since the case was given to him after the train started up again. This leaves the

characters with less than 40 minutes to search the train, locate the impostor and retrieve the case, before the next stop. Presumably, the characters will manage to recover the case from the impostor, but during an altercation with the impostor, the real Phillips is killed, leaving it up to the characters to get the valise safely to its destination.

Scene Three: The characters have the valise, but Phillips is dead, leaving the characters to deliver the valise, along with the information Phillips imparted to them, to his contacts in San Francisco. Unfortunately for them, the Hierarchy has gotten wind of some aspects of the Renegades' plans, and intends to stop the delivery from ever taking place. The characters will have to spend the rest of the train ride hiding from Hierarchy agents who are searching for the valise. The characters are quite likely to find allies in the most unexpected places as they dodge the Hierarchy agents. In the final stages of the story, the characters are discovered by the Hierarchy, no matter how well they are hidden, and are forced into a wild chase throughout the train, culminating in the train's arrival in San Francisco.

The Renegades are constantly divided as to how they should attack the Hierarchy, which is one of the main reasons they have been mostly ineffective to date. Several factions led by a group in San Francisco have been making plans for some time to make a concerted attack on the Hierarchy in that city. Their plan revolves around taking a Citadel in that city, giving them a stronghold from which to launch their attack. Their hope is that if they can remove one city from Hierarchy control, others will follow suit.

Their plan for this is threefold. Part one involved acquiring enough relic weapons to make an assault feasible. This part turned out to be the easiest of all, for once word was spread through the underground, armed wraiths began to sprout out of the woodwork. The second and third parts would prove to be the most difficult. These would require the use of a few of the Renegades' deepest plants within the Hierarchy. Mr. Phillips was involved with the first part of this section of the plan. Through his position within the Hierarchy, he had access to many of the Hierarchy's archives and could procure plans and defenses for the Citadel in San Francisco. An agent in the characters' Necropolis was to secure an artifact that the Renegades considered to be a vital part


of their plan, the Skeleton Key (not to be confused with the Skeleton's Key in the Appendix of **Wraith: the Oblivion**). This ancient object is said to be capable of opening any lock made, permitting access to the Citadel from any entry point they desired. This agent was to meet Phillips on the train, and they would then journey to San Francisco together. Unfortunately, things went awry and the mole who procured the key was identified, although not caught. The fact that he had been identified by the Hierarchy made it impossible for him to board the train without being caught. Thinking fast, the Renegade cell leader decides to send the key with a hired group of wraiths; the players' characters immediately come to mind as either a group he can trust, or possibly as a last resort.

Even though some aspects of the plan have fallen through, he still feels that it could be possible to take the Citadel. The Renegades are already prepared for an assault, and it will only take a few hours for the information and the key to get there via the Midnight Express. Certainly it will take the Hierarchy at least a little time to determine exactly what has been stolen and hopefully, by that time, the Citadel will be under Renegade control.

Fortunately for the Renegades, the Hierarchy has become somewhat overconfident in the loyalty of its members and was not really prepared for such an inside job. Indeed, it will take at least several days for them to figure out exactly what has been stolen. Phillips' deception and theft have so far gone undiscovered, though once they do find out, his days as an informant within the Hierarchy are pretty much over. Once the key is discovered missing, heads will roll in Stygia.

What neither side has recognized is that others have had interest in this key for some time and were quite aware when it was stolen. A Doppelganger known as Lament had been spying on this group of Renegades for some time. When he learned that they were planning to steal the Skeleton Key, he knew that he would be duly rewarded by his Malfean master if he obtained such a prize. He managed to learn their entire plan by killing and duplicating one of the group's regular members. Being a coward at heart, he did not wish to face both Renegades and so planned to take one at a time. He made sure to board the Midnight Express at the way station, to waylay Phillips before he met up with the other agent. He





accomplished this with ease, though he did not kill Phillips, but rather locked him in Stygian Chains and placed him in his room for safekeeping. He is intending to turn him in as an additional prize. He then duplicated Phillips, and once he has gained the other agent's trust, intends to kill him and take the key. After departing the train at the next stop, he plans to take his great prize to his Malfean master and receive his reward. When the characters arrive on the train and simply hand the valise containing the key over to him, he will be pleasantly surprised.

After receiving the case, he will make his way back to his room, where he will discover that Phillips has escaped. Knowing that he will be in trouble once Phillips finds the characters, he immediately begins searching the train for a place to hide.

Having escaped from his chains, Phillips will immediately begin to search for his contact. He will not recognize the characters, so they will be forced to contact him. Once he learns of the situation, he will insist that the characters aid him in locating the impostor, and so the merry hunt will begin. Things will rapidly become more and more complicated as members of the Hierarchy get wind of what is going on. Things could get quite tense for the players and they will be forced to think on their feet, lest they fall prey to the Hierarchy, or worse.

Scene One: Into the Night



e're running with the shadows of the night

So baby take my hand, we'll be all right


Surrender all your dreams to me tonight,

They'll come true in the end

— Pat Benatar, "Shadows of the Night"

The characters are contacted by an acquaintance while in some likely location, such as their haunt or a public gathering place for wraiths. The exact nature of this acquaintance will depend upon the disposition of the characters. If they are active in supporting the Renegades, then they will know her to be a Renegade who is nearly fanatical in her cause. If they are of the Hierarchy, then she will be known to be loyal to the Hierarchy, although this will turn out to be a carefully maintained cover. Finally, if the char-





acters are Freelancers or just independents, then she will just be a trusted ally. Regardless, she should be someone that at least one of the characters knows and trusts. She approaches the characters and, with a great sense of urgency, asks them to perform a small task for her, a task for which she is willing to pay quite handsomely. Her opening offer is five oboli each, though she can go as high as ten oboli, or equivalent relics. Once the characters have accepted, or at least seem willing to listen, she imparts the following.

"The task," she says, "is simply to deliver a small valise to an individual you will meet on the Midnight Express. The individual's name is Phillips. He is a man of medium build, with dark but slightly graying hair. You will be able to recognize him by the ruby ring he wears on his right hand. He will be waiting to meet someone in the dining car of the Orient Express; if possible, he will be seated at the third table to the left as you enter the car from the lounge car. He will be expecting someone else, so if he asks, tell him that Falcon sent you."

With that, she hands the valise to one of the characters and wishes them luck. She also tells them that they have under an hour to catch the train. If the characters are unaware of the local stop of the Midnight Express, she will make sure to give them directions. She may give further information to the characters if they are known to be sympathetic to the Renegades.

At the Train

The characters should have little difficulty making it to the train stop in time, despite the time limit. However, the Storyteller may wish to arrange some obstacle in order to create a bit of tension and to set the pace for things to come. Once the characters arrive within a few blocks of the train station, they discover that the Hierarchy presence is slightly larger than usual. Those characters with Hierarchy status are able to approach the train unmolested; others may have to dodge Hierarchy Enforcers in an attempt to get to the train. Circles that do not have at least one member with sufficient status may have to create some sort of diversion in order to get the valise to the station. Once they arrive at the station, the Enforcers do not interfere with the characters, allowing them to board the train unobstructed.

After they board the train, the characters will most probably proceed directly to the Orient Express cars. There, they find their contact sitting exactly where they were told he would be. After securing Phillips in the Stygian manacles, Lament learned where he was supposed to meet his contact. He arrived there just before midnight to await the meeting with the contact. He has mimicked Phillips' appearance down to the detail, including his ruby ring, which Lament conveniently stole from Phillips.

Going by the Renegades' original plan, Lament is expecting a different individual, so he does not recognize the characters. This does not cause any discrepancies with what the characters are expecting, however, since the real Phillips would not be expecting them either. He does not recognize the name Falcon, but does his best to go along with whatever the characters say. Once they have handed the valise over to him, he doesn't stick around, but excuses himself to return to his room.

Scene Two: Out of the Frying Pan



After the characters successfully make the exchange, they will most likely sit back and relax, planning to enjoy their unexpected trip. They may even decide to sample some of the wonderful meals available in the restaurant car of the Orient Express or relax in the lounge with a drink. The Storyteller should definitely make the characters aware of the luxuries available to them on the restaurant and lounge cars, especially with their newfound wealth.

As the characters are being duped by the Doppelganger, Lament, Phillips manages to free himself from the shackles he has been imprisoned in. After recovering his attaché case, which contains the layout of the Hierarchy Citadel, he immediately heads for the restaurant car in the hopes of locating his contact. Lament sees Phillips in the corridor as he heads back toward the room, and, realizing that he is discovered, hastens to find a hiding place on the train. Immediately changing form, he doubles



back past where the characters are, heading for the front of the train.


Just as the characters are beginning to relax and enjoy themselves, the real Phillips comes into the car, looking around frantically for his contact. This should be enough to pique the characters' interest. If the characters approach him, he is distrustful at first, but will change his attitude once they mention Falcon. He explains how he was attacked by an unknown wraith while he was in his room. The wraith then bound him in Stygian chains and left him in the room. He suspects this wraith to be a Doppelganger, because if he was one of the Hierarchy, he certainly would have identified himself as such. He explains that he managed to escape from the manacles and rushed out here as soon as he could. Phillips then tries to impress upon the characters the urgency of regaining the valise.

A problem could arise here if the characters do not approach this new Phillips. The Storyteller should give them ample opportunity to do so, and make it clear that something is certainly amiss. If need be, have the characters overhear him use the word "Falcon" with another of the passengers. The passenger does not seem to have any reaction, and Phillips will look even more desperate. Hopefully, this will provide enough incentive for the characters to approach him.

Once the characters are convinced that they need to search for the valise, they may go about it in any fashion they desire. Questioning passengers in the lounge car near the sleeper car proves fruitless, but attracts the attention of the Hierarchy, who continue to monitor the characters. Most likely the suspicious behavior of Phillips or the characters will already have attracted their attention, however.

If the Storyteller is feeling particularly benevolent, she may allow the players to make Perception rolls for their characters against a difficulty of 8. If one of them is successful, they may remember a man carrying a similar valise passing back toward the front of train, soon after the false Phillips left.

If the bartender in the salon car is asked, he remembers someone with a valise matching this description passing through, though the man did not match Phillips' description. He seems to recall him heading toward the front of the train. If all else fails, the characters may rely on Arcanos to give them a clue, or Phillips can speak with the bartender.



The characters' exploration of the forward cars gives the Storyteller the opportunity to introduce the players to some of the odd cars that make up the Midnight Express. Use the ones presented here or make up your own. The characters have to be subtle while conducting their search. If they start knocking down doors, they will quickly attract the attention of the Hierarchy members who are on board, not to mention the train security. Phillips will caution them to be more subtle if it proves necessary.

Eventually, through whatever means, the characters find Lament, hiding in an empty freight car near the front of the train. His first instinct is to flee with the valise when he is discovered. He will only fight if cornered, but then he will fight desperately. This scene is important because it sets the tone of desperation and urgency for the final scene. During the fight with Lament, Phillips should be killed. Before the characters find Lament, Phillips should tell one of the characters about the importance of the attaché case he is carrying, and request that the character ensure that both the case and the valise get to the Renegades in San Francisco. Even though Lament is a coward, he is still a dangerous foe, and not to be trifled with. The best way to convey this is to have Phillips lead the attack on him, and be struck down by his initial attack. This may drain Lament significantly, making him easier prey for the characters. You should, however, allow a degree of flexibility in this. If the characters are particularly ingenious or even just plain lucky, they may manage to take down Lament without losing Phillips.

The scene ends, hopefully, with Lament dead, and the characters in possession of the valise. Phillips is probably dead as well, and the characters have his attaché case. If they do not remember it, the Storyteller should mention its presence. The attaché case, unlike the valise, is unlocked, the lock having been damaged during all of the excitement. As the characters begin to gather their wits about them, the Hierarchy shows up, demanding both the briefcase and the valise. There is one Centurion for each one of the characters, plus the Marshal who leads them. Each of the Centurions is armed and carries manacles; the Storyteller should make them an imposing presence which the characters fear.

The characters' poking around the train has aroused some curiosity among those of the Hierarchy who are on board. Some of them immediately

begin to tail the characters, trying to find out what they are up to. When one of the Hierarchy recognizes Phillips, it doesn't take long for them to tell that something is afoot. After witnessing the battle between the characters and Lament, they feel that it is time to step in and find out exactly what is going on. At this time, the Hierarchy do not know what is in the attaché case and the valise, but they damn sure want to find out.

Scene Three: Into the Fire



During this final scene of the story, the characters flee from the Hierarchy, trying to stay one step ahead of them until the train reaches San Francisco. At the end of the last scene, the characters were confronted by a group of Hierarchy, demanding that the characters turn over the valise and case. Their most likely course of action is to either run or fight, though they may attempt to talk their way out of the situation. Talking will do little more than buy the characters a bit of time. The Marshal intends to see what is in the case and valise and will accept no other alternative.

The remainder of the scene should involve the characters fleeing from the Hierarchy. How they go about this is entirely up to the characters, but should involve a wild chase throughout the train, and possibly even outside. Once outside, the characters are at the mercy of the Tempest. They may be able to acquire some assistance from various people aboard the train. Bubbles has no great love of the Hierarchy, and Pierre, the bartender, is sympathetic to the Renegades' cause. Though he will take no direct action against the Hierarchy, he will assist the characters in any way he can, suggesting places to hide and the like. The characters may think of going directly to the train guard for assistance, but they are carrying stolen Hierarchy property, and when the Hierarchy confronts them, they will be forced to turn it over, thus causing the characters' mission to fail.

Wrap Up

Assuming the characters arrive in San Francisco with the case and valise, they are escorted off the



train with enough Renegade force to make even the Hierarchy think twice about attacking. Though if the Storyteller and the players enjoy such things, a massive combat could be run at this point, with the Renegades' goals being simply to get the case and valise away from the train. By no means will they stick around for a protracted fight.

What Next?

The Storyteller and the players have several options at this point. The case and valise can simply be turned over to the Renegades, allowing the characters to go on their merry way, or they could become involved in the take over of the Hierarchy Citadel. Obviously they cannot stick around forever, as they probably have no Fetters here, but some characters may wish to see things through to the end. Ultimately, the success or failure of the assault is the decision of the Storyteller, based on how she wishes her chronicle to progress.

Regardless of what the characters do after delivering the case and valise, they are marked by the Hierarchy as Renegades, having obviously thrown in their lot with them. On the brighter side, they will be well-respected by many Renegades and should certainly gain a point of Status among them.

If the characters failed in the delivery, the adventure could have many different outcomes. Nicholas will not permit the Hierarchy to remove a manacled individual from the train, but it is extremely possible that one or more members of the Circle are captured. In which case the next story could revolve around the attempted rescue of that individual. Whatever the outcome, the characters' existence will almost certainly be affected by the experience.

Cast of Characters

Henry Phillips



Phillips served in the British Secret Service during the Cold War, and was one of the best spies alive. He was killed in the line of duty while trying to escape from East Germany with classified Soviet military docu-

ments. He was one of the few Lemures with the strength of will to make his own way in the afterlife, and was fortunate to have been overlooked by the Reapers.

He joined the Renegades after witnessing first-hand some of the atrocities committed by the Hierarchy. However, he quickly discovered that he had no taste for life on the run and secretly coveted some of the luxuries available to the higher-ups in the Hierarchy. So it was his idea to go undercover within the Hierarchy in an attempt to learn their secrets and assist the Renegades, while at the same time having a much more desirable existence. His talents as a spy allowed him to move up in rank rather quickly, and he soon found himself with access to many secret documents in Stygia. He had nearly been forgotten by the Renegades until they conceived of taking the Citadel, at which point his name came up as an excellent source to gain information on the Citadel.

By the time the call to service came, Phillips had become deeply entrenched within the Hierarchy, and had actually become quite content; after a time one grows deaf to the screaming souls. Still, Phillips is a man of honor and would never abandon his compatriots in their hour of need. He acquired the requested documents and boarded the train at the appropriate time, expecting to only have to make minor excuses for where he had gone for a day. Little did he know that this simple milk run would turn into much more.

Nature: Avante-Garde

Demeanor: Curmudgeon

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletic 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Drive 2, Etiquette 3, Firearms 3, Melee 2, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Enigmas 1, Investigation 2, Law 3, Linguistics 2

Backgrounds: Status (Hierarchy 5, Renegades 5), Wealth 3

Passions: Maintain an easy lifestyle (Greed) 3, Undermine the Hierarchy (Hate) 4, Prove he's still a good agent (Pride) 2

Arcanos: Argos 3, Fatalism 4, Moliare 1

Fetters: None





Willpower: 10

Pathos: 8

Angst: 5

Shadow: The Perfectionist

Thorns: Bad Luck

Shadow Passions: Undermine the Renegades (Hate) 3, Expose Phillips as a spy (Jealousy) 5

Image: A man of medium height and weight and of average appearance. His hair is dark brown, just beginning to gray. He still wears his wire-rimmed spectacles, a relic, and a ruby ring on his right hand.

Roleplaying Notes: Always speak with a distinguished British accent. You always pretend to know anything someone has just told you; never admit that you were unaware of any fact.

Lament

Lament remembers very little about his past, only shattered images of a tortured and painful existence. What he remembers of his life comes to him in brief flashes: an unhappy marriage, struggling to survive in a poor neighborhood, children screaming, a gunshot. Though he still retains Fetters in the Shadowlands, he rarely visits them anymore.

Almost immediately upon his death, Lament (his real name was Lamont) was snatched up by a Hierar-

chy reaper. If not for the Maelstrom which the Reaper encountered upon returning to his Citadel, Lament would have become a Thrall for some powerful Hierarchy lord. During the Maelstrom, he managed to escape his captor, but in the process was consumed by his own Shadow. Lament was no match for his newly released Shadow and it utterly consumed him. It was his own Shadow who led him to the Malfean, Glutterog, who would become his master.

Nature: Loner

Demeanor: Conniver

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Intimidation 2

Skills: Firearms 2, Melee 3, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 2, Occult 4, Politics 2

Backgrounds: Mentor (Glutterog) 5, Wealth 2

Passions: Destroy the Hierarchy (Hate) 4, Serve Glutterog (Love) 4

Arcanos: Argos 3, Inhabit 3, Moliat 4

Fetters: The street where he died, 3; The gun that killed him, 2

Willpower: 5

Pathos: 9



Angst: 10

Shadow: The Abuser

Thorns: Spectre Prestige, Dark Allies

Shade Powers: Shark's Teeth

Image: Through his use of Moliat, Lament has copied Philips' appearance. If killed, he will revert back to his natural form: that of a balding, slightly overweight man in his late 30s.

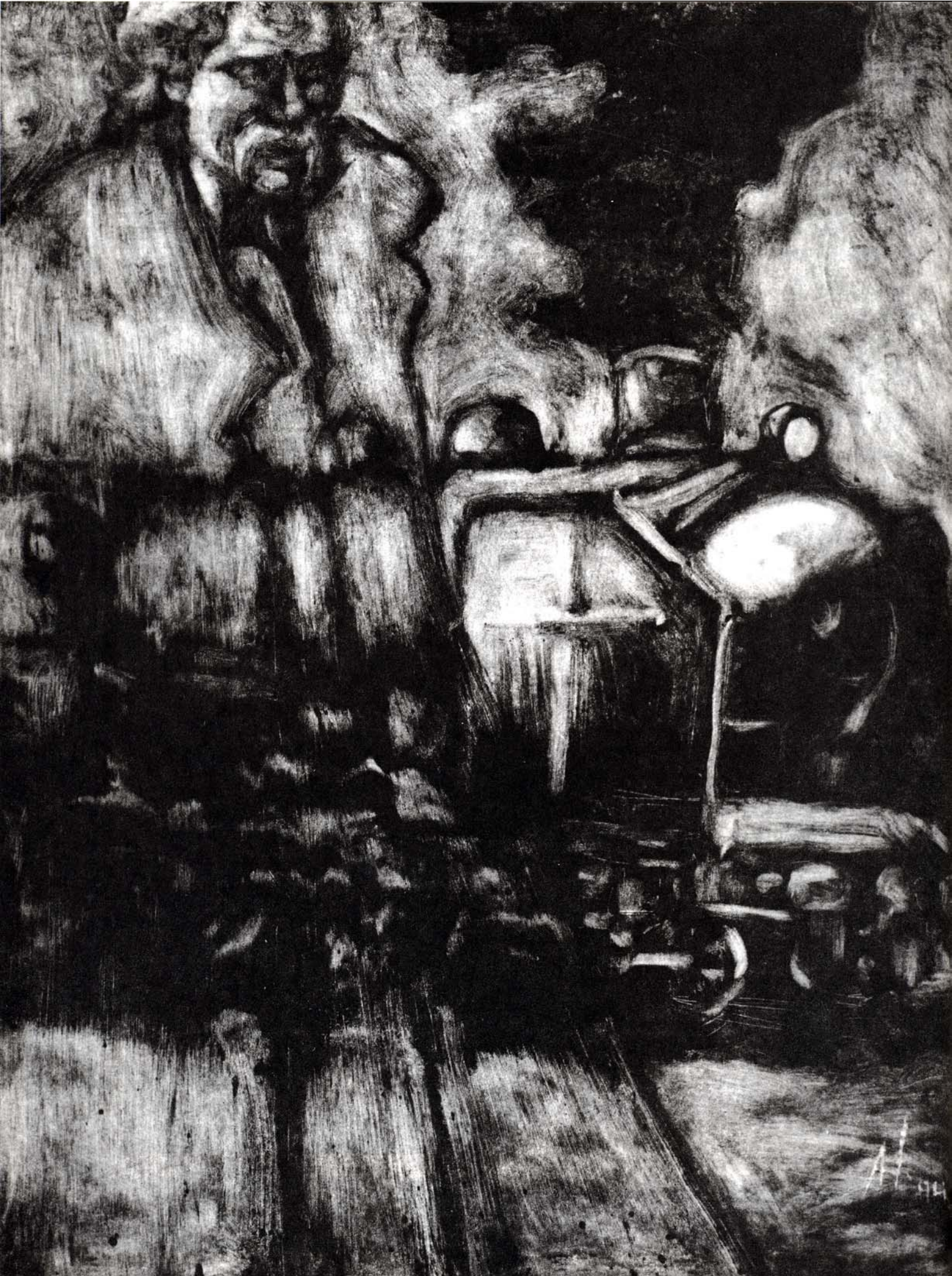
Roleplaying Notes: You are so very good at what you do. Phillips is a fool, and this mission is just what you need to demonstrate to Glutterog what an excellent servant you have become. Nothing can go wrong on this mission, or he will be very cross...

Skeleton Key (Level 4)

This large, odd-looking key is made of Stygian metal. It has a glossy, black appearance and feels oily to the touch, as if it would slip from your fingers. Any lock may be opened with this key, though it makes a high-pitched wail each time it is used. It is rumored that the key was originally made for Charon by his High Artificer Nhudri so that no doors could block him and he could have access to any place within his realm.

Since Charon's disappearance, the key has turned up in many different hands. In fact, the key will never remain with any individual for a long period of time. It is for this reason that the Hierarchy had kept it locked away for so long, but even that did not stop the key from escaping. No one knows how or why this enchantment came to be on the key, though some feel that the key itself has sentience and has its own plans and desires. Regardless, the key will never stay in any one individual's possession for more than a few days; even if it is locked away, it will eventually find a way to escape.







Next Stop: Oblivion

Runaway train, never coming back

Wrong way down a one way track

— Sonic Youth, "Runaway Train"

Special thanks to Chris McGowan for
unforecasted brainstorming.



Next Stop: Oblivion is suitable for a Circle of any size and level of competence. Though Spectres are the main antagonists, they prefer tempting a wraith's Shadow over confrontation. Conflict will emphasize Wraith

against Nature (the Tempest) and Wraith against the Shadow. It should also be noted that characters will find little application for the Arcanos of Inhabit, Puppetry, and Embodiment within the Tempest, the prominent setting.

This story assumes that the Circle boards the Midnight Express in the Eastern time zone of North America, although it is possible to begin from nearly any city. If you choose to begin the story in another time zone, make the appropriate adjustments in the timetable throughout the story. This story may be used

anytime the wraiths decide to travel aboard the Midnight Express.

Theme

This story's theme explores the link between knowledge and power. Often, a lack of information leads to error. An example of this is when passengers board the Malfean train, mistaking it for the Midnight Express. In the past, Xenophon misjudged the Hierarchy reaction to his defiance, and it cost him everything. In both cases, better insight would have averted doom.

By the same token, ignorance can lead to impotence. Unless the wraiths learn the secrets of the train, they have very little chance of escaping. The first step is to learn what they're up against, where they're headed. Only then will they be able to cast off their incapaci-

rating fear of the unknown. In this case, what you don't know can hurt you.

Yet when referring to the powers of Oblivion, what you do know can hurt you, as well. How many wraiths have been corrupted by "truths" learned while within the Tempest? How many have been driven to madness? To the Shadow? To Oblivion? The characters may join the count if they are taken in by Xenophon's promises of knowledge. On a more mundane level, everyone knows that the blunt truth can be more painful than a merciful lie.

The issue is a complicated one, best summarized by a mixed maxim: "Though knowledge is power, remember that one also learns from mistakes."

Mood


This story should evoke gut-wrenching and mind-numbing panic. The wraiths are trapped aboard a moving train together with Spectres, speeding toward an unknown destination. Those who have decided they don't want to ride the latest roller coaster only after being strapped in know the feeling. Now imagine that a few lengths of track are missing...

Background



Shortly after the advent of railroads, an enterprising wraith named Xenophon decided to take advantage of the rapid transit abilities of railroads, and formed his own train to traverse the Shadowlands. While Xenophon's train was among the first, it was quickly overshadowed by the Midnight Express. Like most, Xenophon thought few wraiths would be interested in a train where they would no doubt be preached at non-stop by Ferrymen. Much to his surprise, within a few years the Midnight Express had become the primary means used by the Restless to traverse great distances. Partly because everyone knew that a train maintained by Ferrymen would be safe, and partly because word soon spread that the Midnight Express was a popular meeting place for wraiths of different allegiances, other trains saw less and less use in the Shadowlands. While a few continue to run to this day, the Midnight Express has become synonymous with quick, courteous service and trouble-free passage through the Tempest.





Xenophon was enraged as he saw fewer and fewer passengers using his train, choosing instead to ride the Midnight Express. He blamed the Hierarchy, the only force that potentially could have stopped the formation of the Ferrymen's train. And more than anything, he hated the Midnight Express with a consuming passion that surpassed all other things in his life.

Stubborn to the last, Xenophon remained in his Terminal, now deserted and silent but for the Tempest lapping against its perimeter and mad howls of encroaching Spectres. Eventually, these influences and his own rage and despair drove Xenophon completely over to his Shadow's madness, and Xenophon became a Spectre.

Xenophon's story might have ended here. Yet every so often, a lone railroad car would roll into his deserted Terminal, or his Spectre thug cronies would recover one from the Tempest. Many of these bore the "winged clock" logo of the Midnight Express. At the memory of his loss, Xenophon would become enraged. He hated the Hierarchy for ruining him, and hated the Midnight Express for its special status. His anger could be offset by an occasional chance to "rescue" stranded souls from these solitary cars. After many years of careful planning and preparation, Xenophon is ready to a) defy the Hierarchy by getting his railroad up and running again, b) avenge himself on the Midnight Express by literally stealing its customers, and c) harvest new souls to feed Oblivion.

Alas, the evening he has chosen to launch his false Midnight Express happens to be the night the characters have chosen to board...

Scene One: Wrong Side of the Tracks



Local wraiths know that the Midnight Express stops in the heart of the Necropolis, on an unassuming branch of track in a run-down switching yard. Mortal trains occasionally chug through the yard to on- or off-load empty cars, but for some reason never

use this one particular track. The cross-ties are blasted

and burned, the ties are silver-brown. Rust and grease stain the gravel foundation.


As the wraiths pick their way across the switching yard toward the departure point, a light rain begins to fall. On this side of the Shroud, the droplets appear as a gray mist.

Shortly before midnight, a ghost-train barrels into the informal "station" without so much as a scream from the whistle. With a squeal of brakes and spray of sparks, the train comes to a complete stop at precisely 11:56 p.m. Those familiar with the Midnight Express' schedule may think this decidedly odd. However, don't draw attention to the time unless someone specifically consults a relic-watch.

Regular passengers may note other inconsistencies. This locomotive pulls only a few cars compared to the Midnight Express' infinite stretch. Scene Two describes the make-up and order of the cars. A Pardoner who uses Soulsight on the train will feel a wave of chill darkness wash over her corpus and temporarily drown her senses. Otherwise, the train is not notably sinister, considering the Shadowland's pervasive bleakness. Other passengers board without comment.

Seconds later, an argument is heard from the far side of the tracks. Add expletives as desired. On the other side of the train, the wraiths see a gang in a standoff. One punk faces the others, alternating between being the stunned target of angry protest and a blade-wielding aggressor. As a Puppeteer may realize, the guy is possessed. A Doppelganger from the train chose to slip into the mortal while he passed through the caboose. Though Xenophon ordered his cronies to keep hidden, Oblivion erodes even a Malfean's plans. This Doppelganger is manipulating its host into offering taunts, threats, and crude suggestions to his fellows in an attempt to instigate havoc.

Besides curiosity and the fact that they are witnessing a flagrant violation of the Code of Charon (if they realize they are witnessing a Skinriding), the wraiths have no obligation to interfere. The Doppelganger uses its Arcanos randomly to cause as much pain, destruction, and chaos as possible before the train pulls out. Besides amusing itself, the Doppelganger feeds on these violent Passions. Any successful attack on the mortal dislodges a shadowy stow away. Depending on whim, the Doppelganger fights or flees. Since the characters are likely between it and the train, it flees deep into the Necropolis (perhaps to haunt a later story). This is



optimal, anyway, since it implies but does not identify the train as the Doppelganger's place of origin.

To preserve mystery or keep things moving, the Storyteller can interrupt with a disembodied call for "All aboard!" As the last of the passengers hop on board, the wraiths may (Perception + Alertness, difficulty 5) hear a distant whistle from the east. As if prompted, the car doors slam shut and the train begins to accelerate.

The Real Midnight Express

If the wraiths miss the train, the story is not necessarily over. The real Midnight Express pulls in a minute later, right on time. Stillwell disembarks and demands to know if another train has passed through. He explains that another train has "kidnapped" passengers from stops in Europe. He offers the Circle a deal: His "employer" will pay them handsomely to help investigate this matter. The plan is for them to track the other train from aboard the Midnight Express (just as Nicholas has been doing thus far). Assuming they agree to the deal, have Harbingers attempt to Track (difficulty 8) every hour or so. Successful attempts will confirm that the train traveled west along the Midnight Express' usual route. Yet an hour west of San Francisco, the trail veers off on a branch track deep into the Tempest. At this point, the Midnight Express stops to allow departure. Stillwell reminds the wraiths that their job is to follow the tracks and scout, then return to San Francisco to get help from the local Doomslayers. Following the tracks though the Tempest from here to the Terminal of Tortured Souls takes a base six hours and an Orienteering roll.

The Storyteller might like to improvise an encounter or two — anything from rough weather to a Drone-infested ruin. Aim to frighten rather than to cause excessive injury; there's plenty of danger at their destination (Scene Four).

Should the wraiths turn down Stillwell's offer, they still have plenty of opportunity to get involved as rescue parties are organized by various factions. Rewards and bounties are posted. Those with high Status may find themselves leading a Cohort of Legionnaires, gang of Renegades, or Circle of Heretics. The trail will be considerably colder, but persistence may prevail.





Scene Two: Catching Midnight



This scene is set exclusively aboard the Midnight Express. While attempting to enjoy the trip, the wraiths uncover signs that something is not quite right. Eventually, they learn that they are trapped aboard a Spectre train with an unknown destination. In order to broaden the scope of this scene, setting and events are outlined separately below. Descriptions of the supporting cast are located at the story's end. How these three elements intersect depends entirely on the characters' action.

The Cars' Dark Passions

Due to the corrupting influence of Xenophon's train yard in the Tempest, each car is dominated by a single Dark Passion. If there are Drones in the car, they personify this Passion. For instance, the first-class sleeper was destroyed by a terrorist bomb, and is thus infused with Hatred. As Fate would have it, each car tends to attract Shadows of a sympathetic mindset. If applicable, each hour aboard an appropriate car allows a character's Shadow to roll its applicable Shadow Passion ratings in order to gain Angst. For instance, the sleeper car would attract Shadows consumed by Hatred. Passengers soon find themselves inclined to submit to the car's pervasive mood.

A car's dominant Passion is visible to a Pardoner's use of Dark Secrets or may be inferred from an Oracles' Interpretation. When the wraiths first board, everything seems fine, but this is merely a facade. Very soon, the car's Dark Passion begins to show itself and corrupt the passengers.

While we refer to cars as having Passions, Willpower and Shadows, they are not sentient beings. These properties are imbued by the foul rituals enacted by Xenophon, and do not grant the train sentience. However, these properties do closely mimic the Angst, Willpower and Shadow of sentient beings.

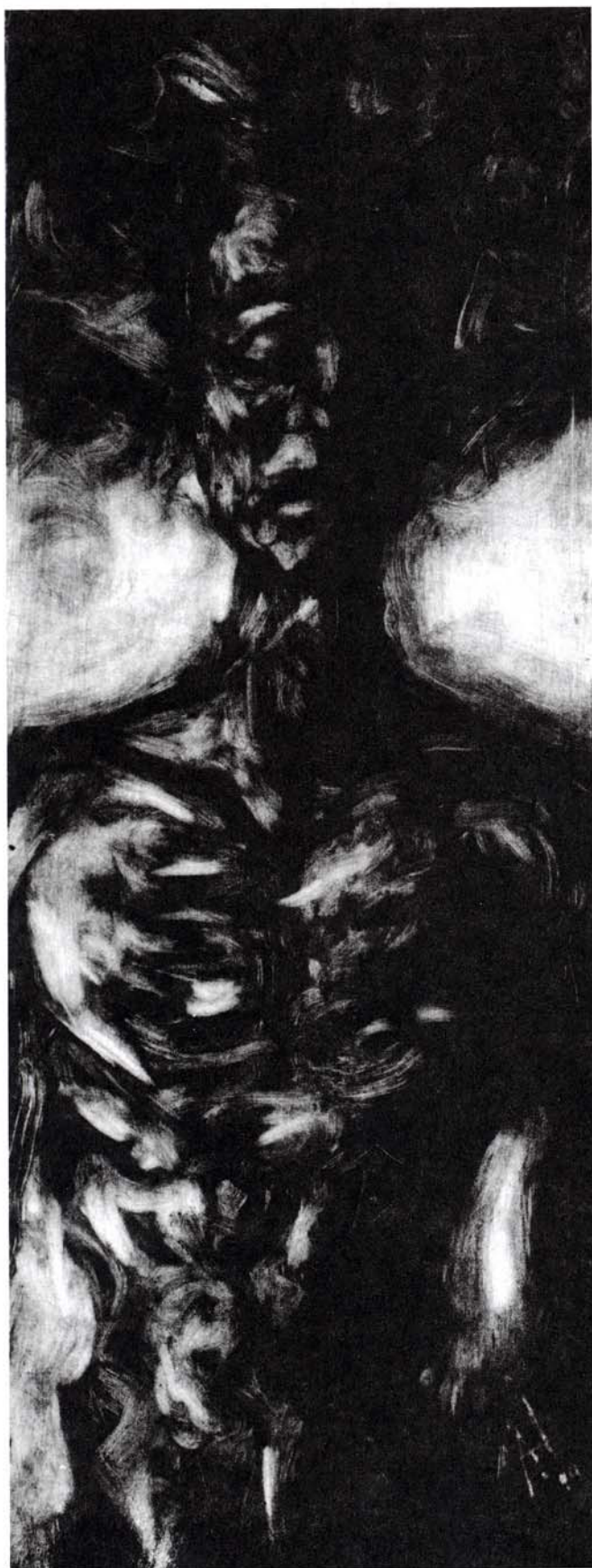
Turning Trains to the Light Side

One way to escape the Malfean train is to redeem a car and its passengers. The rest of the train will recoil in disgust, forcing the car to "jump" the tracks into the Tempest (even if that car was located in the middle of the train). For simplicity's sake, each car and its passengers is treated as a ghostly Collective, if you will. The characters can attempt to exorcise the Collective's Shadow by playing off an appropriate Redeeming Passion (listed for each Collective), succeeding on a Redeeming Action, singing a Ballad, gaining Pathos on an identical Passion roll, and Purifying the car through Castigation. Each of these actions will lower the Collective's Angst by one point. If Angst drops to equal or below Willpower, the Collective temporarily loses its Shadow (see below).

Once a Collective's Shadow is submerged, Xenophon unhitches the car and lets it "jump the tracks" into the Tempest. Those on board feel a sudden jolt. Other passengers may not realize a car is missing until they traverse the train in search of a snack, a nap, or their friends. Xenophon will only allow one car to jump the tracks before catching on to the characters' plan. Though appalled by the "corruption" of his train, he holds on through sheer force of will and the thought of all those souls that will soon be his.

Due to the depth of corruption on these cars, any submerging of the Shadow will be temporary at best. The dominant Dark Passion is listed for each Collective. Note that similar Passions could substitute — Vengeance for Hate, for instance. Below this are examples of Dark Actions that could fulfill the Dark Passion. Whenever such a Dark Action occurs, roll Dark Passion rating (difficulty 9). Each success gives the car one point of Angst. So long as the Collective's Angst exceeds its effective "Willpower," it can make a Catharsis roll; success draws out the Shadow once more. Should Angst reach 10, the Collective — car and non-player passengers — automatically submits to the Shadow.

Note that a wraith does not have to know about these Redeeming or Dark Passions to accidentally trigger them. On the other hand, Xenophon and the Spectres are perfectly aware of the cars' Dark Passions and the means to manipulate them.



Setting

A locomotive, a caboose, and eight cars form the Malfean train. Each car is a near-replica of its counterpart on the Midnight Express, save for a few details. Xenophon's Artificers and craftsmen worked for decades to create these cars, which mock the Midnight Express with their almost seamless similarity.

Locomotive Engine

The engine is one of the only cars that does not appear to be modeled on its counterpart on the Midnight Express. The locomotive is actually two parts: the engine and tender. The 462-A13 Class engine was obviously inspired by the famous Pacific Engines created by Baldwin Locomotive Works in the Skinlands after 1935. Crafted of Stygian steel, it speeds along the rails like a huge blue-gray bullet atop 12 enormous wheels. A single headlamp glowing with barrow-flame parts the Tempest ahead, its phosphorescence glinting dimly off the twin tracks. Immediately behind the engine lies the tender. It carries a jumble of fuel-ore mined from the Labyrinth, discarded relics, burned-out artifacts, even shreds of Corpus. Unlike Skinland trains, the A13 engine does not operate on steam and coal. Rather, it utilizes powerful Arcanos, which must be fueled by raw souls.

To reach the cab, a wraith must crawl over the tender. A yellow sign warns, "Only Crew Beyond This Point." The cab is empty but for the smell of oil, grease, hot metal, and burning flesh. The firebox is open. Unless they succeed on a Willpower roll (difficulty 6), those who peer into the dancing barrow-flames are mesmerized and attempt to climb inside the firebox — receiving aggravated, third-degree burns.

The engineer and fireman, Xenophon himself, inhabits the locomotive much of the time. Potential saboteurs are warned by a burst of barrow-flame or simply flung from the train (using Outrage). Xenophon casts fuel into the firebox every so often. Witnesses hear — or think they hear — a final wailing sigh as the souls are consumed by Oblivion. Witnessing this is worth one point of temporary Angst.

The engine cannot be redeemed.

Second-Class Coach

This car is a nearly perfect re-creation of its counterpart on the Midnight Express, replete with Civil War era ambience. It has subsequently become the apotheosis of the Glorious Brotherhood of Battle.

In the Shadowlands, this car seems almost empty. Two Legionnaires complain of their transferal between Citadels. A likely Renegade tries to sleep. In the corner, a Heretic preaches to no one in particular. Once the train plunges into the Tempest, the car no longer seems quite so empty. In the dimmed light, a wraith can detect dozens of faded forms; when the lamps gutter, these Drones grow more distinct. They represent all of the young Americans who went eagerly, ignorantly off to war.

As the facade wears off, the soldier-Drones no longer appear as fresh recruits, but as wounded veterans. Their punctured and shredded bodies are kept together by splints, bandages, and bodybags. Mud, blood, and bullet holes decorate their uniforms. Even the more substantial wraiths subscribe to the car's Dark Passion. The two Legionnaires are busy interrogating the Renegade, who takes perverse pleasure in resisting. The Heretic flagellates herself. The very walls of the car drip blood and ooze smoke.

Dark Passions: Pain 3

Dark Actions: Combat, scenes of suffering

Redeeming Passions: Pity, Mercy

Redeeming Actions: First-aid, caregiving

Angst: 8

Willpower: 6

Club Car

Like the club car on the Midnight Express, this car serves a variety of spicy snacks, though any who are familiar with the original car will note that the food offered here has a decidedly bitter flavor. It burns with an unearthly heat, thinly masked by too much seasoning.

This car is a magnet for brawls. Tempers flair among the diners. Someone begins shouting for the bartender, who is conspicuously absent. A kitchen fire blazes in the absence of the cook.

Dark Passions: Anger 2

Dark Actions: Arguing, fighting

Redeeming Passions: Happiness, Calm, Friendship, Forgiveness



Redeeming Actions: Helping someone, saving a choking victim, forgiving a clumsy waitress

Angst: 6

Willpower: 4

Second-Class Sleeper

While far more crowded than its original, this car is a passable re-creation of the car it is based on. This car houses a number of Enfants on long trips and the hangers-on of the Big Wigs from the first-class sleeper: personal Pardoners and other servants, secretaries, reporters, Chanteurs, nervous bodyguards, and mistresses. Most passengers have heard stories of Spectres waylaying travelers in the Tempest. These wraiths subscribe to the old adage of safety in numbers, and huddle together like a flock of sheep. During Slumber, many have nightmares. The last thing anyone needs to learn is that Spectres are *running* the train.

Under the Shadow's influence, the car's electric lights go out with a flash of blue, and the heater fails soon after the train leaves the Shadowlands. Passengers run about like decapitated chickens or cower in their rooms. Screams, hyperventilation, and mindless survival instincts become the order of the day.

Dark Passions: Fear/Panic 4

Dark Actions: Causing panic, intimidating a suspect

Redeeming Passions: Courage, Trust, Reassurance

Redeeming Actions: Fighting off the Phantom "Spectre" attack, calming frightened passengers

Angst: 5

Willpower: 3

Second-Class Lounge

Destroyed in a head-on collision in 1918, this car has an odd pattern of wrinkles lining the walls, where it appears to have been forced back into shape following the accident. A woman watches her children play quietly while a man reads a battered paperback. When the Shadow becomes dominant, the children stop playing and instead sit quietly. Others on board become laconic, unhelpful, and lazy. Passive resistance is one common tactic.

Dark Passions: Frustration/Sloth 2

Dark Actions: Impeding investigation or giving up, losing three or more games of poker (if this causes the character to become upset), losing patience with the children





Redeeming Passions: Perseverance, Satisfaction

Redeeming Actions: Playing with the children, taking losses with good humor, taking direct action to make things better

Angst: 7

Willpower: 5

Dining Car

Unlike the Midnight Express' Orient Express dining car, Emile and Pierre are not present here to provide passengers with good-natured gossip and ever-polite service. The staff on board this car is sloppy and rude.

Once the train gets underway, the table-top flowers wilt and cutlery seems spotted. From somewhere issues the smell of vomit. Diners become intent on gorging and gulping, ignoring the soiled napkins folded neatly by their plates. A drunken couple makes a scene of themselves.

Dark Passions: Lust/Greed/Indulgence 3

Dark Actions: Seduction, stuffing oneself gluttonously on the food and drink provided

Redeeming Passions: Generosity/Love/Chastity/Temperance

Redeeming Actions: Paying for someone else's meal, having a romantic diner with no ulterior motives

Angst: 7

Willpower: 5

First-Class Lounge "The Cerberus"

From here on back, the cars are accessible only to first-class passengers. Two Legionnaires stand just inside the door to enforce privacy. To trick the guards and fit in with the crowd requires a Manipulation + Subterfuge roll. The base difficulty is 6; adjust this up or down by a few points depending on the wraith's cover story and appearance. If caught, the wraith will be locked in the baggage car until after the trip (when charges may be filed). Those with legitimate business here (e.g., someone needing to confer with a Mentor) can get past the guards with an Appearance + Leadership roll (difficulty 7). With either tactic, visitors are limited to a few minutes before having to leave.

This luxurious car is gaudily decorated in purple, gold, and natural oak. While it has much the same ambience (initially at least) as its counterpart on the real Midnight Express, it differs in many details. It is fur-

nished with plush chairs, carved tables, brass framed mirrors, Oriental rugs, chinaware spittoons, and an organ. Curtains and blinds can be drawn over the large windows.

The party-goers in this car are mainly Gaunts; all are wealthy and important. Some of these big names have fallen very hard, indeed, succumbing to suicide, reckless living, powerful enemies. These wraiths have one thing in common: They are all in a position to work full-time at forgetting their death. Dancing, drinking, and false friendships are mixed indiscriminately. On the impromptu dance floor, a Victorian gentleman tries to keep up with a roaring-drunk flapper. The stocky man in mutton-chop whiskers and waistcoat is Overlord Crispin, responsible for collecting Thralls for Stygia; his charges are kept in the baggage car. Crispin is among the wraiths who have mistakenly taken this train, thinking it to be the Midnight Express.

Beneath the veneer of respectability, bullet-holes and blood-stains appear in the furnishings. If told of the train's suspected destination, the passengers resign themselves to going out with a bang — they party even more-fiercely. Xenophon is particularly careful to keep this car's passengers under the Shadow; too many of its passengers are powerful. If the car is redeemed, he lets it jump the tracks just to be safe.

Dark Passions: Cynicism/Resignation 2

Dark Actions: Telling the party-goers of future doom (as learned through Fatalism), use of Manipulation or Subterfuge

Redeeming Passions: Trust, Acceptance.

Redeeming Actions: Success on Charisma-based rolls

Angst: 10

Willpower: 8

First-Class Sleeper

This modern sleeper car was destroyed only a few years ago, and like the car it is modeled on, this car features individual compartments, providing travelers with a modicum of privacy.

These compartments house the first-class passengers, their families, and friends. Overlord Crispin's room contains a key to the baggage car.

This car's passengers act upon their repressed contempt for one another. This likely results in at least one "accident."

Dark Passions: Hate 5



Dark Actions: Murder, Arson

Redeeming Passions: Love, Empathy

Redeeming Actions: Comforting or reassuring frightened passengers, acting as a calming influence, guiding the other passengers to constructive action rather than panic

Angst: 10

Willpower: 8

Baggage Car

Like the boxcar on the Midnight Express, this car was used during World War II to transport men, women and children to concentration camps in Eastern Europe. This is one of the only cars that Xenophon was able to find a near-copy of in the Tempest, so it required only minimal work.

The key to the padlocks on each of the doors can be found in Overlord Crispin's room. Picking the lock requires a Dexterity + Streetwise (or perhaps Repair) roll (difficulty 8, three successes needed). Within, a dozen slack-featured Thralls huddle in the darkness. They believe they are headed for simple servitude, but the truth is far worse. If the car were to reach Stygia, these Thralls would be destined for the furnace, to be reduced into coinage or perhaps an artifact. Since this train is run by Spectres, who knows what their destiny will be...

Dark Passions: Despair/Sorrow 5

Dark Actions: Telling the Thralls of their fate

Redeeming Passions: Hope

Redeeming Actions: Freeing the Thralls

Angst: 4

Willpower: 2

Caboose

A small cramped compartment, this car contains the other "staff" of the train, who dejectedly sit on benches and overturned buckets, some playing cards. A dozen Spectres are crammed into this car, waiting impatiently for the order to subdue the passengers. Xenophon hopes this will not be necessary. Like the engine, the caboose is unredeemable.



Timeline

The following timeline assumes that one of the characters owns a relic watch set for Eastern Standard Time.

11:46 EST

As described in Scene One, the Malfean train makes its East Coast stops, its idle engine hissing impatiently. Three minutes later, the train departs at the sound of another train's screaming whistle. With a chuffing noise like the slow pant of a dying dog, the train picks up speed. The tracks groan under 50+ tons of rolling stock. Like a signal tower, a flaming Thrall waves the train past, seemingly ignorant of the melted corpus pooling at its feet.

12:30 a.m.

As soon as the passengers have settled in, they may begin to wonder why the conductor has not come round to check tickets. Those familiar with the Midnight Express have not even seen Stillwell.

12:56 a.m.

The train pulls into the next set of stations, including New Orleans. A few passengers board via the second-class coach. None of the other doors will open. Those who seek to disembark are misdirected to the rear of the train. By the time they get back to the coach car, the doors have closed again. Wraiths who look out the window may see a ghostly flatbed truck back up against the baggage car. Something is obviously on- or off-loaded, but no one seems sure what...

After the train departs, Joshua Payne and Ms. Elisa Garrett find themselves in the second-class lounge car, or whichever car the characters are currently in. This is a perfect time to begin introducing them to the characters. After a short lull, Ms. Garrett proposes a game of cards. Poker is the game she has in mind, and it's soon obvious that she plays very well. The game lasts until the train makes its West Coast stops.

Each card player rolls Manipulation + Subterfuge; the difficulty equals the highest Perception + Subterfuge total (other than your own) at the table. One can spend Willpower on this roll, but it's considered cheating; someone spots the ace-up-the-sleeve if that player

fails due to the Rule of One. The player with the most successes wins.

2:00 a.m.

The Spectre train remains in the Shadowlands for about half an hour, but doesn't stop. In the light of a full moon, characters watch as a nearly deserted Arizona shanty-town glides past. The train re-enters the Tempest. Knowing that the next stop is San Francisco, Ms. Garrett appears cheerful as she deals (for solitaire, if poker has ended). Yet her face falls after looking at her cards. Dropping them, she flees to her sleeping compartment. If someone peeks at her hand, he sees nothing strange about it. An Oracle, however, could use Interpretation to perceive bad tidings. The eight of spades, for instance, represents "Fate repeated and death."

In her compartment, Elisa has given over to her Shadow. Anyone checking up on her will become a target by her Keening and (if so inclined) natural charms. It is likely that any intimacy will only lead to Angst.

2:56 a.m.

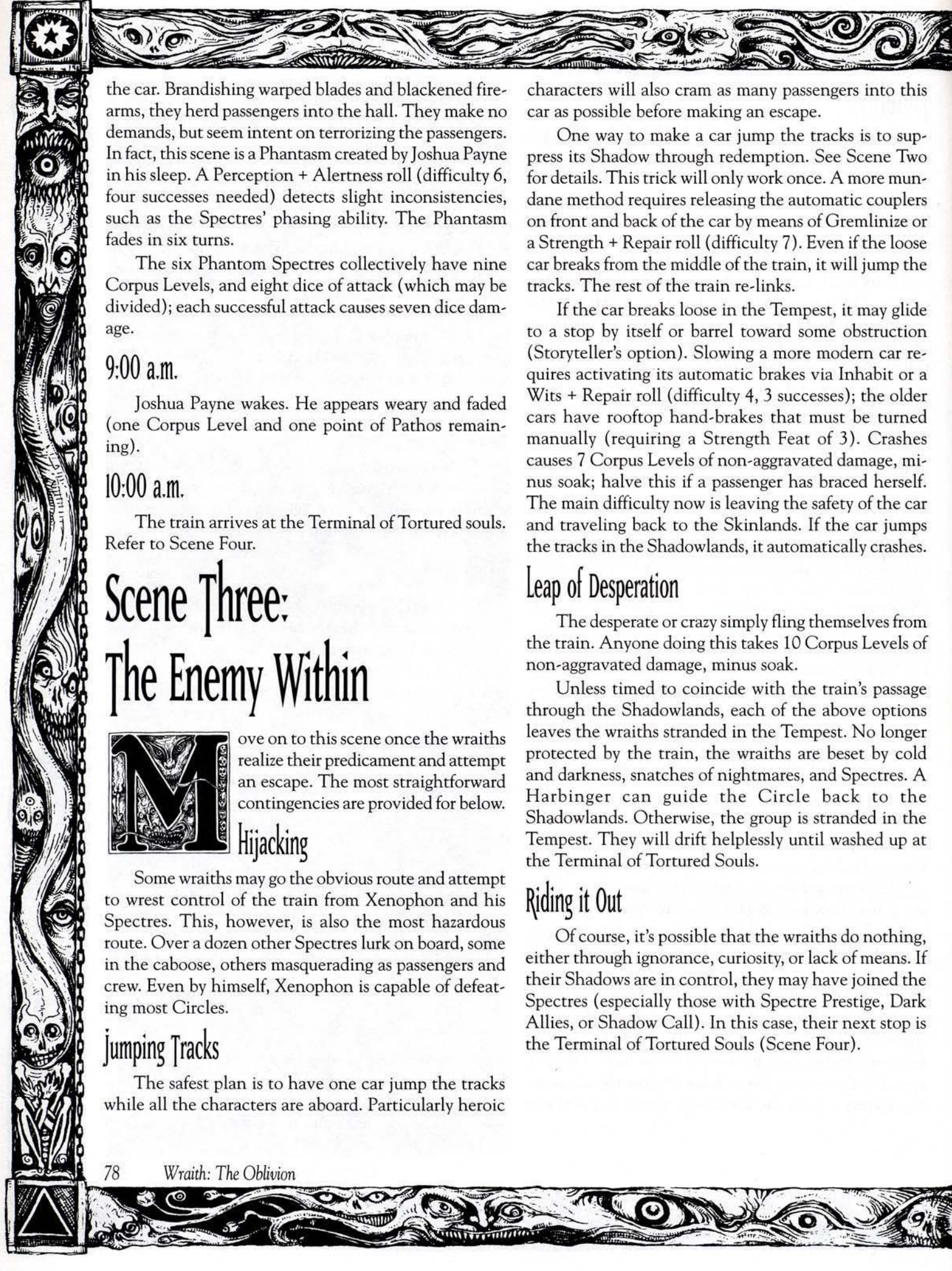
The train barrels through San Francisco, not even slowing as it approaches the terminal. Numerous armed Centurions have assembled on the platform. Other wraiths wave frantically and scream at the speeding train. If someone opens a window and listens carefully (Perception + Alertness, difficulty 6), she can make out the word "Spectre" before the train's whistle screams loud and long. Their horrified expressions recede. A sinking feeling should hit the passengers right about now.

4:00 a.m.

The train left the Shadowlands half an hour ago. With a sudden lurch, it takes a side track and descends deep into the Tempest. The next leg of the journey will take six hours. Joshua Payne yawns and his Phantasm Arcanos provokes weariness in nearby wraiths (Dreams of Sleep). In any case, he falls asleep.

8:00 a.m.

Spawned from the nightmares of Joshua Payne, six "Spectres" attack the second-class sleeper car. Anyone present (such as Oracles roused by Danger Sense) may witness their arrival as they phase through the walls of



the car. Brandishing warped blades and blackened fire-arms, they herd passengers into the hall. They make no demands, but seem intent on terrorizing the passengers. In fact, this scene is a Phantasm created by Joshua Payne in his sleep. A Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 6, four successes needed) detects slight inconsistencies, such as the Spectres' phasing ability. The Phantasm fades in six turns.

The six Phantom Spectres collectively have nine Corpus Levels, and eight dice of attack (which may be divided); each successful attack causes seven dice damage.

9:00 a.m.

Joshua Payne wakes. He appears weary and faded (one Corpus Level and one point of Pathos remaining).

10:00 a.m.

The train arrives at the Terminal of Tortured souls. Refer to Scene Four.

Scene Three: The Enemy Within

Move on to this scene once the wraiths realize their predicament and attempt an escape. The most straightforward contingencies are provided for below.

Hijacking

Some wraiths may go the obvious route and attempt to wrest control of the train from Xenophon and his Spectres. This, however, is also the most hazardous route. Over a dozen other Spectres lurk on board, some in the caboose, others masquerading as passengers and crew. Even by himself, Xenophon is capable of defeating most Circles.

Jumping Tracks

The safest plan is to have one car jump the tracks while all the characters are aboard. Particularly heroic

characters will also cram as many passengers into this car as possible before making an escape.

One way to make a car jump the tracks is to suppress its Shadow through redemption. See Scene Two for details. This trick will only work once. A more mundane method requires releasing the automatic couplers on front and back of the car by means of Gremlinize or a Strength + Repair roll (difficulty 7). Even if the loose car breaks from the middle of the train, it will jump the tracks. The rest of the train re-links.

If the car breaks loose in the Tempest, it may glide to a stop by itself or barrel toward some obstruction (Storyteller's option). Slowing a more modern car requires activating its automatic brakes via Inhabit or a Wits + Repair roll (difficulty 4, 3 successes); the older cars have rooftop hand-brakes that must be turned manually (requiring a Strength Feat of 3). Crashes causes 7 Corpus Levels of non-aggravated damage, minus soak; halve this if a passenger has braced herself. The main difficulty now is leaving the safety of the car and traveling back to the Skinlands. If the car jumps the tracks in the Shadowlands, it automatically crashes.

Leap of Desperation

The desperate or crazy simply fling themselves from the train. Anyone doing this takes 10 Corpus Levels of non-aggravated damage, minus soak.

Unless timed to coincide with the train's passage through the Shadowlands, each of the above options leaves the wraiths stranded in the Tempest. No longer protected by the train, the wraiths are beset by cold and darkness, snatches of nightmares, and Spectres. A Harbinger can guide the Circle back to the Shadowlands. Otherwise, the group is stranded in the Tempest. They will drift helplessly until washed up at the Terminal of Tortured Souls.

Riding it Out

Of course, it's possible that the wraiths do nothing, either through ignorance, curiosity, or lack of means. If their Shadows are in control, they may have joined the Spectres (especially those with Spectre Prestige, Dark Allies, or Shadow Call). In this case, their next stop is the Terminal of Tortured Souls (Scene Four).

Scene Four: Terminal of Tortured Souls



Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men?

— catch-phrase of *The Shadow*

The wraiths end up here for one of three reasons: a) they failed to escape Xenophon's train; b) they fell into the Tempest sometime during the story and were washed up here; or c) they have come to rescue lost souls.

Xenophon passes judgment on each of passengers depending on their apparent merit. Those who show promise are targeted for corruption, while the rest are designated to be melted down. If any wraith has turned to the Shadow, Xenophon offers her a place in his retinue. Even upstanding wraiths are subject to his persuasion. By communicating with her Shadow, Xenophon can learn of a wraith's hopes and ambitions and — if in his power — offer to help achieve them. In exchange, the wraith must agree to serve him for a year and a day (by which time the Terminal will have corrupted her anyway). Those attempting to persuade Xenophon of their sincerity must achieve three successes on a Manipulation + Subterfuge roll (difficulty 5). Xenophon gives them free run of the Terminal, though he secretly orders his Spectres to keep an eye on them.

Wraiths who resist are dragged off to a storeroom and sealed in amphoras (see **Storeroom** below).

Setting

The Terminal is a twisting Labyrinth of sandstone walls and Doric columns, flickering shadows and haunted echoes. With infinite winding tunnels, stairs, rooms, and platforms, the place resembles a vast subway station more than a standard terminal.

The Terminal is vast and filled with many dangers. Attempts to map it will prove fruitless. Most of the complex consists of deserted tunnels, patrolled by a bull-headed Shade, Barghests, and other Spectres. Three locations are of particular note.





• Switching Yard

The switching yard is a cavernous, arched tunnel with dozens of intertwining tracks lining the floor. The Malfean train will be resting here, along with a small hand car. The wraiths could use either in their escape (see below).

• Storeroom

Beneath an abandoned restaurant lies a low-ceilinged storeroom packed with amphoras. Each holds a mindless wraith, its Corpus having molded to the shape of the vessel after years of containment. The amphoras are easily smashed from the outside. However, raw Oblivion coats their insides. To break out, a wraith must make a Test of Strength (matching 6) or be imprisoned until freed by someone outside. Hopefully, this someone is not a hungry Spectre.

• Xenophon's Court

This "court" is a stale chamber furnished with disintegrating relics. Some of the more mindless Spectres Moliate themselves into chairs, so wraiths should look before sitting. Here Xenophon will attempt to corrupt the wraiths with promises of power. If anyone makes a deal with him, a tablet inscribed with Linear B script appears nearby. Strangely, the wraith can translate easily. The tablet teaches the first three dots in any one Arcanos or Ability. In exchange for this knowledge, the wraith must also accept a like amount of permanent Angst.

Pitfalls

For each "day" spent in the haunted Terminal, a wraith gains one point of temporary Angst, unless continually protected by a Pardoner's Bulwark.

Making an Escape

To escape the Terminal of Tortured Souls, the wraiths need only find one of the railway tunnels out and flee. Once in the Tempest, a Harbinger can lead the group back to the Skinlands. Of course, the Spectres will attempt to prevent any escape. Use the Pursuit rules to make this last scene exciting. If on the hand car, add together the Strengths of the two characters at the draw bar and roll against difficulty 6. Use this as the Pursuit pool. The pursuing Spectres roll Dexterity + Athletics as usual (difficulty 6). However, wraiths should beware the Malfean train!

If the characters manage to liberate a large number of passengers, they may wish to steal the Malfean train.

The controls are fused; only an Artificer can operate them using Gremlinize.

Conclusion: Journey's End



fter returning to the Shadowlands, the wraiths receive their just rewards. If their scouting went well, Stillwell gives each character 2 oboli; double this reward if they rescue many passengers.

Only if the characters help others should you consider giving the full three experience points for the end of the story.

For their brush with Oblivion, each character gains one dot to either Eidolon (if she has it already) or permanent Willpower (if she doesn't).

Xenophon may become a major antagonist in your chronicle. He is extremely powerful opponent; the characters' best bet is to strike at him though his Fetter.

Characters for Next Stop: Oblivion



his section details three significant Storyteller characters. The Storyteller should be prepared to populate the train with dozens of interesting personalities. Those good at improvisation should have no problems, and others may wish to prepare a short list of extras — name, concept, and demeanor should be enough. This is a good opportunity to introduce characters who will become important later in the chronicle.

Joshua Payne

Joshua has just finished rigorous basic training of his own devising — a double major in Journalism and Political Science obtained from three institutions. A Degree in Self Satisfaction is the only one he received, and the only one he would accept. He died of a fever while traveling across Europe trying to “find himself.” Long hours of little sleep and less food had taken their



toll, and his body put up little resistance when the virus struck. Always a dreamer, Joshua has become a master of Phantasm during his time in the Shadowlands.

Nature: Critic

Demeanor: Rebel

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 1

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Brawl 1, Dodge 1, Empathy 1, Expression 3, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 1

Skills: Drive 1, Leadership 1, Repair 1, Survival 2

Knowledges: Computer 1, Enigmas 1, Investigation 1, Law 1, Liberal Arts 2, Linguistics 1, Occult 1, Politics 1

Background: Contacts (Shadowlands) 1, Contacts (Skinlands) 1, Eidolon 1, Notoriety 3

Passions: Explore the Shadowlands (Curiosity) 4, Fight injustice (Anger) 3, Return home to see family (Love) 2, Advise the ignorant (Pride) 1

Arcanos: Phantasm 5

Fetters: Journal, 2; Eurail Car, 1; Home in Southwark (London), 2; Jenny Chan (girlfriend), 2

Willpower: 6

Pathos: 7

Shadow: The Pusher

Angst: 3

Thorns: Death's Sigil, Trick of the Lights, Devil's Dare
Shadow Passions: Act spontaneously (Recklessness) 4, Haunt family (Sorrow) 4, Criticize others (Cynicism) 2

Image: Sporting black hair shaved into a rooster-cut, a fatigue jacket, and combat boots, Joshua appears to be an enthusiastic punk. One look into his intelligent green eyes, however, shatters this first impression.

Roleplaying Hints: Barely listen to what others say before jumping in with your own opinion. Your favorite expression is: "I don't know about that, but anyway...". You become very animated when your interests enter conversation: hidden agendas of world nations, injustice, the inherent self-destructive nature of the human soul, problems with modern society, and the omnipresent signs of bureaucracy.

Ms. Elisa Garrett

Ms. Elisa Garrett was born on August 25, 1865, in a Colorado dustbowl called Mirage. Her mother was a soiled dove, her father some chance stranger. She followed in her mother's footsteps, but supplemented her income in dance halls and gambling dens. She dreamed of the money and fame that would allow her and her mother a better life. Many entertain such a dream, but this girl had real talent.

By chance, a club owner (passing though Mirage on his return to San Francisco) heard her sing. Mr. Talbot offered her a opportunity to perform in his Golden Lotus Club; she could even bring her mother. Just as her destiny seemed to be falling into place, the Wheel of Fate turned. A few days later, Elisa was run down by a wagon. Her sole measure of fame was the tombstone erected by Mr. Talbot in Mirage... which has since crumbled to dust.

Nature: Visionary

Demeanor: Traditionalist

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 2, Brawl 1, Dodge 2, Empathy 3, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2, Seduction 2

Skills: Dancing 2, Gambling 4, Performance 3, Ride 1

Knowledges: History 2, Railroad Trivia 3

Background: Contacts (Shadowlands) 3, Memorium 1, Status (Hierarchy) 1, Status (Renegades) 1, Wealth 3



Passions: Thwart Fate (Vengeance) 4, find someone to care for her (Love) 3, become famous (Pride) 2, become rich (Envy) 1

Arcanos: Keening 3, Fatalism 3, Moliat 1

Fetters: Golden Lotus Club in San Francisco (resolved), 1; Mr. Talbot (dead), 3; piano in Jake's Saloon (destroyed), 2; Tombstone in Mirage, Colorado (crumbled), 4

Willpower: 5

Pathos: 6

Shadow: The Abuser

Angst: 4

Thorns: Bad Luck, Tainted Touch

Shadow Passions: Seduce handsome men (Lust) 5, Fall once again under the Wheel of Fate (Cynicism) 3, Cheat and steal (Spite) 2

Image: Ms. Garrett is an attractive woman with dark hair and blue eyes. Even without a bustle, ample curves fill out her blue velvet dress. The lace trim and silver buttons complement her hat. Though Ms. Garrett usually maintains a ladylike image — including white lace gloves — she also enjoys being a bit daring or flirtatious. For instance, she may sit with one leg exposed above a black boot.

Under the influence of her Shadow, Elisa's features change. She wears dark make-up, and removes her

gloves. Beneath the dusty dress, her ribcage seems crushed.

Roleplaying Hints: For the entirety of your short life, you entertained others. Thus you have decided to devote the afterlife to pleasing yourself. Unfortunately, your mission is hampered by Oracle's instincts — you read into everything, and the messages are often dark.

Xenophon

Xenophon's life began and ended over 3000 years ago. He was one of the Mycenaean kings who conquered Crete around 1400 B.C. He refused to accept his natural death, feeling that he had not accomplished enough in life. Xenophon found an outlet for his administrative talents within the Hierarchy. He was partially responsible for many policies and construction projects within Stygia, and had attained a great deal of status among his fellows in the Hierarchy. Xenophon's drive to always be the first and the best served him well in the Hierarchy, but eventually led to his downfall. Claimed by his Shadow, Xenophon now broods silently in his abandoned Terminal, plotting the downfall of the Midnight Express.

Further information on Xenophon is outlined in the Background to this story.

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Survivor



Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 6

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 6, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 1, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Intimidation 4, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Archery 2, Etiquette 3, Firearms 3, Leadership 4, Melee 3, Ride 2, Sailing 2, Swimming 1

Knowledges: Bureaucracy, Finance 1, History 3, Law 1, Linguistics 2, Politics 2

Background: Artifact (.357 Magnum) 4, Artifact (Stygian blade) 2, Notoriety 2

Dark Passions: Destroy the Midnight Express (Hate) 5, Manipulate others (Deceit) 2

Arcanos: Argos 2, Inhabit 3, Lifeweb 4, Moliat 4, Outrage 3

Fetters: Golden deathmask in Athens Museum, 2

Willpower: 8

Pathos: 6

Angst: 10

Thorns: Spectre Prestige 3, Infamy 1, Shadow Call

Image: Xenophon's hair and mustache have turned white with age, though he is otherwise in good shape for a 50-year-old. Ebony eyes peer forth from a darkly-tanned, chiseled face. Xenophon wears faded denim pants, a woolen tunic, and riding boots. His *xiphos* (or short sword) and .357 Magnum hang from either hip. For all of Scene Two, he will Inhabit the locomotive.

Roleplaying Hints: You present yourself as a Harbinger, and certainly have the skills to pull off this description. Act brave, gallant, and world-weary — a cross between Captain Blood and the stranger-with-no-name. This, of course, is just a facade. Devious and deliberate, only repeated reminders of the "magnificence of the Midnight Express" can stir your reckless anger. You speak Greek, Latin, and English.





The Price of Vengeance

It is horrible beyond the power of words to express, to think that the civilized world should suffer such bloodshed and destruction.

— General John J. Pershing about World War I



scandal seems to be part of the fabric of politics, something every politician fears but is willing to risk when enticed with power or the opportunity to do good. In “The Price of Vengeance,” the characters get involved in scandal; not one of their own mak-

ing, but that of one of the most powerful wraiths in Stygia.

The story finds the characters on one of the cars of the Midnight Express. Passengers aboard the car speculate that Charon’s Inquisition is hunting for evidence to bring down the First Consul of War and the First Consul of Pestilence. Believing that the Consuls pioneered the inhuman methods of mass destruction used during World War I, and thereby increased the number of dead within their domains, the Inquisition is offering large rewards for evidence of this involvement that, they hint, has recently surfaced.

Like it or not, the fingers of scandal are long, and the characters soon find themselves touched by them.

Theme

The Price of Vengeance revolves around two themes: the nature of vengeance and the nature of scandal. The characters find themselves being entreated to contribute to scandal, whether the scandal is deserved or not, as part of a plan for vengeance. Characters must make up their own minds as to whether or not they want to play the game, and if so, whether by their own rules or someone else’s.

Mood

Characters should feel a tinge of paranoia, as if they are being watched, and should feel a gloom settling around them as they penetrate deeper into the mysteries that power keeps (the scandals carefully hidden and very much feared by those who committed past wrongs).



Setting

The story is set in the Shadowlands of America, Austria, and Germany, between which the characters will travel to gather evidence against the Anacreon Schroeck. The locales for the story are the parlor car "Victoria," two third-class German compartment coaches on the Midnight Express, and the World War I bunker containing the damning evidence, described below.

Background




*I saw a war widow in a laundrette
Washing the memories from her
husband's clothes
She had medals pinned to a threadbare
greycoat
A lump in her throat, with cemetery eyes...*

— Marillion, "Blind Curve"

The Price of Vengeance begins in 1564, when the wraith and Legionnaire Marcus Auberges appeared to his nephew in a dream. Auberges, who had tutored his nephew in combat skills while alive, revealed to the youth an army's potential for victory when hand-thrown artillery — in the 1500s, a recent invention and a precursor to the hand grenade used in modern warfare — was used in combat. Unfortunately for Marcus, his nephew recorded the dream in detail in his journal — a piece of evidence revealing that Marcus had violated the Code of Charon.

Centuries later, after a meteoric rise up the ranks of the Hierarchy and, ironically, a saturated history of interference with the world of the Quick, Auberges found himself poised to take the seat of the First Consul of War. His intentions good, he wanted to use the Consul's power to better the lots of all Hierarchy wraiths, but to fuel his ambition, he needed the power of souls. In the 1800s, he hit upon an idea that, unbeknownst to him, was supplied by his own Shadow: To get the souls he needed, he would further mold the cultural developments of the living by introducing the concept of the Gatling gun, an extension of ideas that had previously led to the developments of such weapons of mass destruction as boiling oil, the bow, and the cannon.

Auberges' plan was to introduce newer, more efficient weapons to the mortal world every few decades.



Early in the 20th century, Auberges was raised to the position of First Consul of War. Simultaneously, he began formulating a plan that would quickly introduce the concept of trench warfare into mortal society. From his analysis of it (greatly influenced by his Shadow), trench warfare could bring about the deaths of thousands upon thousands of soldiers — all of whose souls could, by rights, be harvested by the Consul's wraiths.

Auberges soon discovered that the fastest route to his goal was to pass his knowledge along to German scientists, who, at that time, were gearing up for war at the behest of Kaiser Wilhelm II. The Consul never took a direct hand in the affair, fearful of retribution under the Code of Charon. However, he charged his loyal friend, Maximilian Schroeck, who was promoted to the status of Anacreon of Dresden (one of the most powerful of the seven Anacreons in the Necropolis of Dresden), to attain these goals for him.

The Anacreon's servants, acting on strict orders, contacted one Helmut Kliburn, a German colonel and sub-advisor on paranormal activities to Kaiser Wilhelm. Ironically, one of the wraiths hired by the Anacreon's servants, an enigmatic Gaunt named Drake, appeared to the mortal Kliburn as Maximilian Schroeck, a hated wraith with whom he'd crossed swords centuries earlier — if anyone was caught, he reasoned, it would be this Maximilian. To his potential misfortune, the Anacreon never involved himself with details.

Simultaneously, Schroeck's servants made Kliburn's name known to the Kaiser's top men, and Kliburn became one of the Kaiser's trusted advisors. Kliburn eventually revealed to the German leader the names of chemists and other scientists in whose heads the Consul's wraiths had planted the ideas of chemical weaponry (poison gas grenades) and machine guns.

Events worked in Schroeck's and the Consul's favor, and, in 1914, trench warfare became the bane of the Quick. Poison gas became the next combat item on Schroeck's war agenda, and, in 1915, the horrible dream first became a reality; in the Second Battle of Ypres, fought from April 22 to May 25, 95,000 men lost their lives. The two leaders' Shadows were quickly taking control.

In an unrelated event a few years later, one Wyatt York, a friend of a member of the Industrial Workers of the World (a socialist group that opposed America's involvement in World War I) was accidentally rounded up during America's war hysteria, along with a thousand other strikers, forced into a cattle car, transported

to the Arizona desert, and left there without food and water. Unlike most of the other strikers, York died from heat exhaustion.

Not one to let go, York became a wraith. Dead at the hands of those who wanted to draft him, he sought to avenge himself by seeing those who left him in the desert die in the pestilent trenches of Europe. Upon dying, York was recruited as a Legionnaire in the Hierarchy, proved himself, and eventually came under the direct supervision of Schroeck.

At about this time, the Inquisition of Charon began its inquiries into the Consul of War's and the Consul of Pestilence's involvement in the concept of trench warfare. Ever vigilant, Schroeck hired York to destroy evidence of the Anacreon's and the Consul's involvement in the affair. However, Schroeck never revealed to York what it was that he was destroying. At the same time the Inquisition went to work finding evidence (which yielded no results), York succeeded in destroying Kliburn (who died mysteriously, then was captured, disincorporated, and smelted in the Artificers' forges), Kliburn's reputation (he was sent to an asylum), and all his personnel files (which described his contact with the "ghost" named Maximilian, and all the visions that Maximilian revealed to him).


Schroeck's servants and Drake mysteriously disappeared, but York is still around, now filling the shoes of Schroeck's late Marshal.

Despite the Anacreon's preemptive strike, Schroeck was and is not entirely familiar with all the avenues that his servants took to fulfill their duties, and thus pieces of evidence remain of which he is unaware. The characters enter the story at a time in which the Inquisition, chafing at their past failures, has taken a renewed interest in finding evidence that implicates the Anacreon Schroeck and, if possible, the two Consuls who were originally put on trial for transgressing the Code of Charon.

Remaining Evidence and Clues

While most of the evidence implicating Schroeck and the Consul in instigating trench warfare has been destroyed, shreds of evidence remain for the fortunate (or unfortunate) to discover:

- **Kliburn's death certificate & medical records.** The death certificate states that Kliburn died of a heart attack, while his medical records indicate that he was in perfect health at the time of his death. Kliburn died



at Heidelberg Sanitarium after 10 months in a nearby insane asylum.

- **An Artificer's personal records** that Kliburn, upon death, was captured, disincorporated, and smelted in the Artificers' forges.

- **A list of German chemists**, handwritten by Kliburn. Duplicates can be found in the Kaiser Wilhelm II's archival vaults in Munich, dated 1905. Other papers listing precisely the same chemists, in precisely the same order, appear among the notes of the Kaiser's top men in the above-mentioned archives.

- **A German mail/passenger train**, destroyed when a "compromise" car (a car having wide wheel treads that allowed it to run on both wide- and narrow-gauge tracks) derailed during a snowstorm in mid-spring and caused the entire train to plunge over the side of a steep, narrow bridge near Dresden. All the occupants were killed in a fiery inferno, as the coal stoves in the overturned cars spilled their burning contents onto the passengers, and chlorine gas, which was a part of the cargo, was released into the cars. Once every ten years, on the night on which it made its final run (April 15, 1915), the train appears as part of the Midnight Express, consisting of different cars that crashed and lost their occupants and cargo to fire when they were derailed years ago (so far, from studying this cycle of appearance, only Drake has figured out which cars appear when).

When the characters get involved, four cars from the Mallet (as the train was called) appear: two third-class compartment coaches, a cargo car for the top-secret chemical weapon load it carried, and a cargo car for mail, which hid other top-secret papers (see below) amongst its contents. At the time of the accident, the compartment coaches (made for civilian transport in 1910) were filled with German soldiers, headed from Dresden to Frankfurt, who were guarding a scientist named Bernard Hauptman. The cargo cars, each guarded by five German soldiers, contained chlorine gas weapons and top-secret papers that revealed an occult involvement in the train's passage:

- A list of German chemical plants that were capable of manufacturing chlorine.
- A draft list of eminent German, Austrian, and German-sympathizing Swiss chemists and other scientists.
- A list of iron manufacturing plants.
- Gold bars from Swiss banks in five unmarked bur-lap bags.

- Prototypes of chlorine canisters first used by Germans in the Second Battle of Ypres (April 22 to May 25, 1915).

- **A secret bunker.** The soldiers' destination was this bunker in Frankfurt, where they were to transport Hauptman, the chemical weapons, and the gold in safety. The Frankfurt bunker contains:

- Hauptman's work area and files, including a typed account of Hauptman's discovery of chlorine, and a handwritten note from Kliburn to Hauptman, dated 1907, asking if poisonous gasses could be contained in a small, portable metal globe that could explode on impact. Also: whether or not this would be an extraordinarily difficult weapon to produce.

- A copy of Kliburn's psychological report recommending that he be admitted to an asylum, and a full report of his delusions with details about "Maximilian the ghost."

- The only piece of evidence implicating the First Consul of War (other than the threat of Schroeck's testimony) is **the long-forgotten diary entry** written by the Consul's nephew about a dream in which his uncle appeared to him. A scholar in medieval and Renaissance history has just published *Renaissance Dreams*, a book which includes a facsimile of this diary entry (dug up from research in the musty libraries of France), dated 1564. The book has received rave reviews in the *New York Times Book Review*, and the author, Professor Madeleine Frenier, is from the characters' locale. If characters trace this lineage, they may find the relationship between the nephew and the Consul.

Note that not all of the evidence mentioned above is dealt with in this story. If you wish to include more clues and evidence, the above are some suggested leads that the characters can follow.

Act I: The Price of Vengeance



he characters hear that evidence relating to the Trench Trials (short for Trench Warfare Trials, as the trials of the First Consul of War and Pestilence are known) has resurfaced and are given a lead.



Scene One: All Aboard...

Scene one begins when the characters board the Midnight Express. No matter where or which car they board, they will receive the information that follows. To convey this information, you can use the scene described below, or create your own based on your knowledge of the characters in the Circle.

En route from Boston to Chicago (as well as countless other cities in the same time zones), the characters overhear a conversation between Stillwell, the conductor, and a passenger:

Passenger (raising his voice, but in good humor): You 'can't say for sure'? What is that supposed to mean?

Stillwell: My good sir, I've only heard *rumors*. If one were to put all one's faith in rumors, one would be always at Fortuna's mercy.

Passenger (settling back in his chair): Well, you're a lot of use. Who could tell me more?

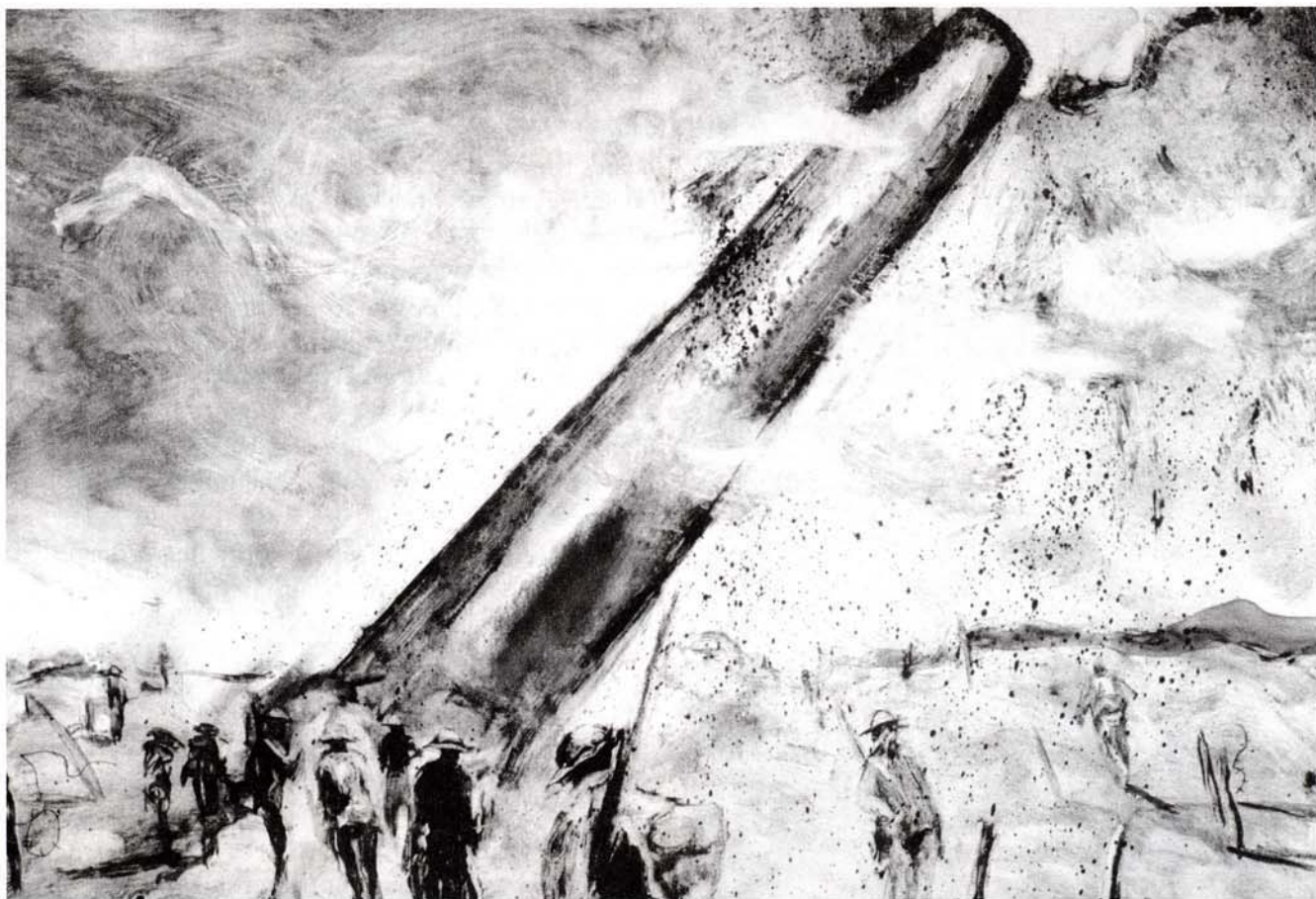
Stillwell: Drake, I would presume.

Passenger: Hah! I want to talk to a ghost, not a fantasy. Good evening.

Stillwell: Good evening, sir.

With a tip of his cap, Stillwell takes leave of the wraith and walks over to the characters to collect their tickets. If the characters ask Stillwell what the conversation was about, he whispers confidentially that there is a rumor going that evidence relating to the Trench Trials has resurfaced.

Stillwell remembers the Trench Trials (only the knowledge that was publicly available at the time, however), and will elaborate if asked. Essentially, this information revolves around the fact that the First Consul of War and the First Consul of Pestilence were summoned to trial for instigating the concept of trench warfare in World War I in order to bolster their power, thereby violating the Code of Charon. They were acquitted of the charges when Charon's Inquisition could not find enough evidence to make the charges stick. However, the Inquisition has continued to search for evidence that would justify hauling the two Consuls back into court a final time. Anyone who could find this evidence would have the eternal gratitude of the members of the Inquisition (assuming it implicated the Consuls), and the eternal hatred of the Consuls (assuming they were at fault).



When Stillwell has collected the characters' tickets, he moves on to the next car.


Scene Two: Lost Love...

Shortly afterward, the passenger who was speaking to Stillwell looks cautiously around and moves to a seat next to the characters (if the characters get up and move around, he ends up in the same car as they, and converses with them as follows).

The wraith introduces himself as Tommy O'Hallahan. Tommy appears to be in his early 20s, and has a friendly, outgoing demeanor that is hard to discourage. He explains that he is traveling from Boston to Chicago to find some of the evidence against the Consuls, and that he wants to find this evidence because he was one of the soldiers who died in World War I when chlorine gas filled his trench. All he wanted to do was to get back to Boston in one piece so he could marry his love, Kathleen Daugherty, and have a family. She is lost to him now.

What the characters don't know is that Tommy O'Hallahan is actually Drake in disguise. Just before the Trench Trials, Drake, who worked for the servants of the Anacreon Schroeck, disappeared, having discovered that the Anacreon was destroying evidence and that Drake was a fair piece of evidence himself. Drake has been traveling incognito in the Shadowlands for almost 80 years, avoiding Schroeck's patrols, barghests, and assassins. Finally, he has grown weary of running, and he plans to destroy Schroeck without revealing that he (Drake) even exists.

Drake started the rumors on the Midnight Express just to stir the pot, but he is also there to recruit wraiths who appear to be capable of collecting the evidence. Under no circumstances will Drake reveal who he is, nor will he directly reveal the locations of the evidence against Schroeck because he does not want Schroeck to know that he is in any way involved with the revival of interest in the Trials. Additionally, he refuses to ask Charon's Inquisition for help, as he secretly harbors the belief that the Inquisition is an agent of Oblivion. Drake does not know of *Renaissance Dreams* (see **Remaining**



Evidence and Clues above), but if he did, he would pursue that too, being bitter enemies with any cohort (i.e., the Consul) of Schroeck's.

In the meantime, Tommy continues to talk cheerily to the characters about the war, about Boston, about practically anything, until another wraith (a recruit that Drake has been sizing up) saunters up to the group and calls out Tommy's name in greeting. Tommy warmly returns the greeting and introduces the wraith to the characters as Jimmy Sheehan, also from Boston's South Shore. He explains that he and Jimmy are headed to Chicago together, both to search for Trench Trials evidence.

After exchanging pleasantries, Tommy shrugs amiably, wishes the characters luck, puts his arm around Jimmy's shoulders, and steers him away from the characters. As he does so, a note flutters to the floor near one of the character's feet. The note reads, "Meet me in the first-class sleeper car, compartment number 6, before midnight. Some friends of yours wish to see you." If the characters insist on asking Tommy for more information, he uses his charm to derail their questions ("Don't worry about it now — you'll find out soon enough! Come on, let's go have a drink.")

Scene Three: Railway Rhetoric...

Tommy (Drake) waits for the characters to arrive at compartment 6 until just before midnight. If the characters have not shown up by then, he assumes that they are not interested, and leaves them alone. They know he will be in Chicago for at least a few days, and if they go looking for him, he'll know about it and find them. If the characters have no interest in finding the evidence now, fine; just continue to drop hints about rewards of 20 oboli, or the status that finding the evidence will bestow on the finders.

If the characters arrive at the compartment, they will not see any of their friends, but Tommy will be sitting on his rumpled bed, reading *War and Peace*. When Tommy notices them, he puts his book down, opens the door for them, and motions for them to sit.

Characters will most likely protest the fact that Tommy has lied to them; their "friends" are clearly not there. Before they can leave, however, Tommy tells them that their friends had to disembark unexpectedly at the last stop, but that he was asked to leave a message with them. The message he leaves depends upon

the characters' affiliations (which Drake has guessed because he has secretly been watching the characters):

- **If the characters are members of the Hierarchy:** "The Consuls are marked: 20 oboli for hard evidence of their involvement, which Tommy will help you find. We have no love for the Consuls."

- **If the characters are Renegades:** "Now's the time to get back at the Hierarchy. Tommy will help you get the evidence, and the 20 oboli."

- **If the characters are Heretics:** "Get the evidence against the Consuls before the Inquisition does. Then we can have justice done on our own terms, and we can watch the Inquisition and the Hierarchy squirm."


- **If the characters have no affiliations:** "20 oboli for the Consuls' heads. Tommy's a good friend of ours; he'll help you find the evidence."

In case the characters ask, the "friends" that supposedly have left this message will be contacts that the players have listed on their character sheets, members of their Circle, or members within their affiliation (Hierarchy, Renegades, or Heretics) whom they know. In reality, Drake is contriving these messages for his own ends, and he has Stillwell playing along with his game (if the characters need verification).

Shortly after passing along this message to the characters, the Midnight Express reaches Chicago, and Tommy tells the characters that he must leave. He hands them a sealed envelope, also, he claims, from their friends, and tells them that he will be in contact with them. They do not need to tell him where they'll be; he'll find them. Tommy takes leave of them, and, before the characters know it, has disappeared into the crowd at the station. Jimmy Sheehan is also nowhere to be found.

Inside the envelope are enough one-way tickets for each of the characters to Vienna, Austria on a first-class coach car on the Midnight Express. Have the characters roll Perception + Investigation (difficulty 3) to notice that the fine print on the tickets states that they must be used before April 14th, which gives the characters five nights to use them. Also included is a note, reading "From Vienna, continue on to Frankfurt via third-class coach on April 15th. Be on the golden fleece of the mallet... you'll know what to do."

Clearly, Drake wants the characters in Vienna by April 14th and on a third-class car heading to Frankfurt on the 15th. This is because he knows that the characters must board third-class to Frankfurt on the



15th to get onto the "Mallet," the train containing evidence against Schroeck which appears on April 15th every decade (see **Remaining Evidence and Clues** above for details).

If the characters did not receive the envelope from Tommy (for whatever reason), but they still seem interested in finding the evidence, Tommy manages to get Stillwell or another resource to give them a note: "Take the third-class coach from Vienna to Frankfurt, April 15th only. Be on the golden fleece of the mallet... and look for the Schlüsse." The characters must figure out (or find out later) that this reference is to the car "Das Goldene Vlies" (German for "The Golden Fleece") on the train called "The Mallet." The "Schlüsse" refers to a psychological report that contains evidence that implicates the Anacreon Schroeck in violating the Code of Charon.

Act II: The Ghostly Mallet



Act II takes place when the characters decide to follow the Austrian lead. When they do so, they quickly discover how many rumors the Trench Trials have spawned, and they discover the ghostly cars of the "Mallet," and the evidence they contain. They also discover two other things: that the Mallet's destination is a secret bunker in Frankfurt, and that someone is following them.

Scene One: How Rumors Fly...

Scene one begins when the characters board the Midnight Express to Vienna. The first-class tickets are for the same seats they had on the "Victoria" when they met Tommy, although they can change these if they so desire. Private compartment 6 has also been reserved for them for the duration of the trip. If the characters made their own reservations, those reservations (whatever they were) stand.

Throughout this scene, wraiths whisper wild rumors of the locations of exhumed evidence — many of the rumors unsubstantiated. The general mood of the passengers is similar to that of the prospectors during the California goldrush; there is a lot of money to be made, and nobody's giving away any secrets for free. Aboard the train are also numerous Hierarchy, Renegade, and

Heretic wraiths interested in finding the evidence for their own reasons. A few of these wraiths have been following the characters (they were aboard the train to Chicago and noticed the characters talking to Tommy). During this scene, these wraiths either continue to follow the characters, or they attempt to recruit, dig information out of, or intimidate the characters.

Use the following scenarios at different points throughout the journey:

- **The Bar:** At the bar, three Renegades sit down next to the characters. Even if the characters are Renegades themselves, these guys do not seem particularly congenial. They start asking the characters all sorts of questions about their destination and belongings. The characters are wise if they refuse to answer. If they refuse, the Renegades return to their seats and, that night, come to compartment 6 to rough the characters up and gather information from them.

- **The Dining Car:** A stately, elderly wraith sits down near the characters with a French newspaper, orders his meal, and begins to read. He is, of course, listening intently to everything the characters say. If they say anything about gathering evidence for the Trench Trials, he approaches them later to find out if they would be interested in joining in the Inquisition's hunt to find evidence. If they are interested, he asks for their destination and digs for any information the characters might possess. He then tells them he will meet them somewhere at their destination (whatever destination the characters told him of). He never does meet them, but when the characters disembark, he dispatches an Inquisition patrol to follow them.

- **The Parlor Car:** A wraith in mid-1800s dress, replete with bustle and skirts, sits down across from the characters. After a few minutes, she strikes up conversation with them, innocently asking them their destination and telling them that she is headed to Cairo, because she heard that a long-lost page from Nostradamus' journal resides at the bottom of one of the pyramids. In his journal are rumored to be predictions that a ghost would one day cause millions of the living to die in a warlike catastrophe. She says she thinks the Inquisition will give her 20 oboli for this page, if she can find it. This rumor, of course, is one of the more ridiculous being bandied about the train. However, this wraith is more savvy than she appears; she is offering this worthless knowledge in exchange for information from the characters about other leads. She seems only vaguely interested in the characters' destination (in an



effort to convince them that she is not trying to swindle them), whereas in reality she is hoping for a solid lead.

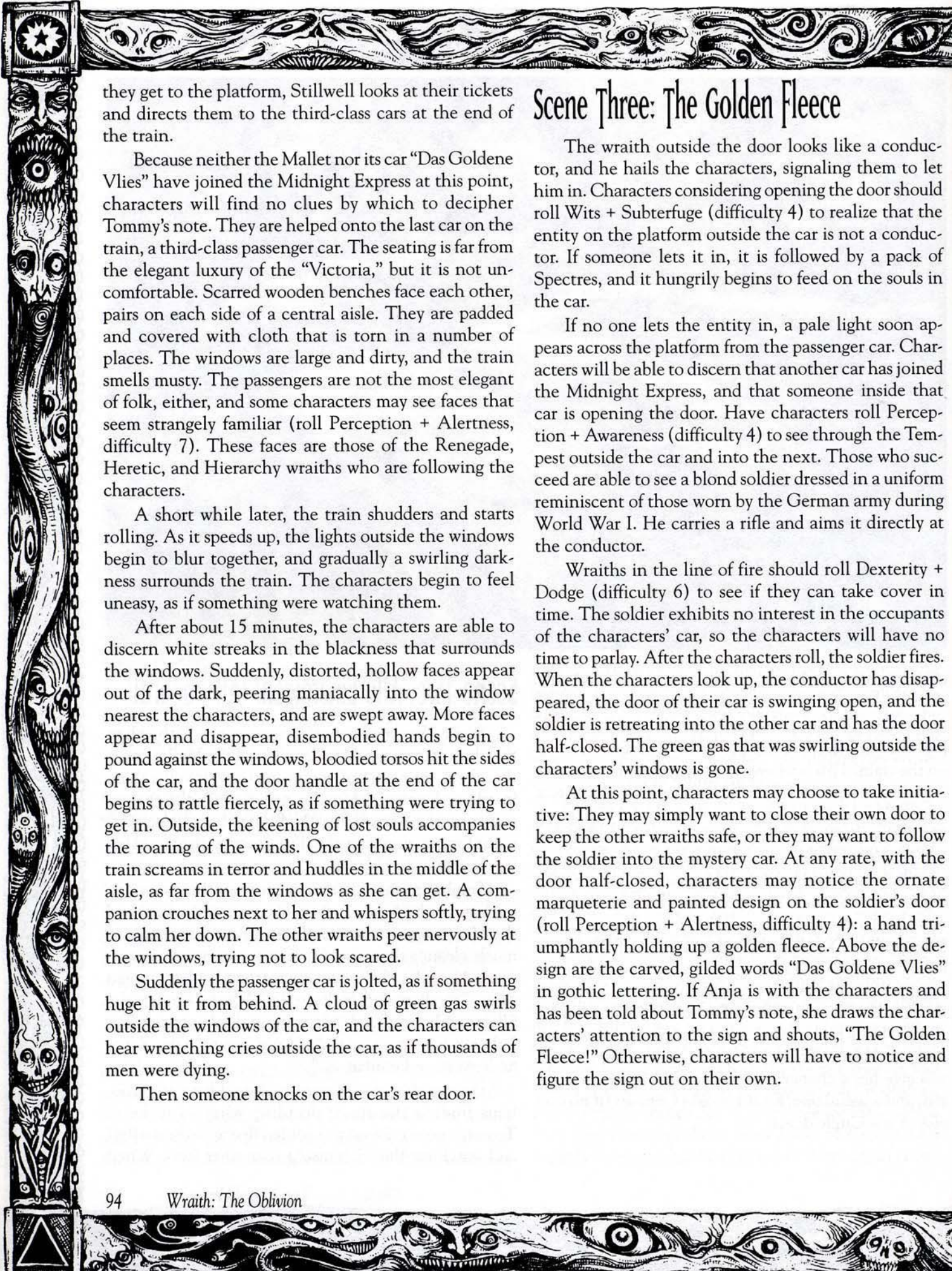
- **The Private Compartment:** Ironically, this is probably the least private place the characters can go on the train. This is where the Renegades plan on scaring the characters off. This is also where the characters meet a Puppeteer, Anja Jensen, who wants to join them. She is interested in finding out if trench warfare during World War I was wraith-influenced and, if so, who to punish. Jensen has heard that the characters are searching for evidence, and so approaches them in their private compartment late at night. Have characters roll Perception + Occult (difficulty 6) to identify Jensen as a Puppeteer; she has a strange accent that seems to be a combination of Danish and Southwestern-American accents, and a predilection for dressing in beat poet clothes: black hiphuggers, a black and white thin-striped scoopneck shirt, black flats, and a beret. If the characters give her a chance, she will prove a loyal companion, and a useful one, for she speaks German (if no one else in the Circle does).

Scene Two: Alle Einsteigen! (All Aboard!)

Scene Two begins on the night of the 15th, when the characters are in Vienna to board the Mallet (note that there are plenty of opportunities to involve them in other adventures along the way, since, if the characters are in the Necropoli of the United States, the Midnight Express must travel halfway around the world before it arrives in Vienna).

Emphasize the differences between the American stations (if that's where the characters embarked) and the Vienna one; for example, the Austrian station is much cleaner than the American stations they have seen. Also, the characters are surrounded by German signs: "Straßenbahn Haltestelle," "Überschreiten der Gleise verboten," and "Halt: wenn das Läutewerk der Lokomotive ertönt oder die Annäherung eines Zuges anderweitig erkennbar ist."

Despite this, the characters should have no problems finding the train; deciding what to make of Tommy's note ("Be on the golden fleece of the mallet" and watch for the "Schlüsse") is another story. When



they get to the platform, Stillwell looks at their tickets and directs them to the third-class cars at the end of the train.

Because neither the Mallet nor its car "Das Goldene Vlies" have joined the Midnight Express at this point, characters will find no clues by which to decipher Tommy's note. They are helped onto the last car on the train, a third-class passenger car. The seating is far from the elegant luxury of the "Victoria," but it is not uncomfortable. Scarred wooden benches face each other, pairs on each side of a central aisle. They are padded and covered with cloth that is torn in a number of places. The windows are large and dirty, and the train smells musty. The passengers are not the most elegant of folk, either, and some characters may see faces that seem strangely familiar (roll Perception + Alertness, difficulty 7). These faces are those of the Renegade, Heretic, and Hierarchy wraiths who are following the characters.

A short while later, the train shudders and starts rolling. As it speeds up, the lights outside the windows begin to blur together, and gradually a swirling darkness surrounds the train. The characters begin to feel uneasy, as if something were watching them.

After about 15 minutes, the characters are able to discern white streaks in the blackness that surrounds the windows. Suddenly, distorted, hollow faces appear out of the dark, peering maniacally into the window nearest the characters, and are swept away. More faces appear and disappear, disembodied hands begin to pound against the windows, bloodied torsos hit the sides of the car, and the door handle at the end of the car begins to rattle fiercely, as if something were trying to get in. Outside, the keening of lost souls accompanies the roaring of the winds. One of the wraiths on the train screams in terror and huddles in the middle of the aisle, as far from the windows as she can get. A companion crouches next to her and whispers softly, trying to calm her down. The other wraiths peer nervously at the windows, trying not to look scared.

Suddenly the passenger car is jolted, as if something huge hit it from behind. A cloud of green gas swirls outside the windows of the car, and the characters can hear wrenching cries outside the car, as if thousands of men were dying.

Then someone knocks on the car's rear door.

Scene Three: The Golden Fleece

The wraith outside the door looks like a conductor, and he hails the characters, signaling them to let him in. Characters considering opening the door should roll Wits + Subterfuge (difficulty 4) to realize that the entity on the platform outside the car is not a conductor. If someone lets it in, it is followed by a pack of Spectres, and it hungrily begins to feed on the souls in the car.

If no one lets the entity in, a pale light soon appears across the platform from the passenger car. Characters will be able to discern that another car has joined the Midnight Express, and that someone inside that car is opening the door. Have characters roll Perception + Awareness (difficulty 4) to see through the Tempest outside the car and into the next. Those who succeed are able to see a blond soldier dressed in a uniform reminiscent of those worn by the German army during World War I. He carries a rifle and aims it directly at the conductor.

Wraiths in the line of fire should roll Dexterity + Dodge (difficulty 6) to see if they can take cover in time. The soldier exhibits no interest in the occupants of the characters' car, so the characters will have no time to parlay. After the characters roll, the soldier fires. When the characters look up, the conductor has disappeared, the door of their car is swinging open, and the soldier is retreating into the other car and has the door half-closed. The green gas that was swirling outside the characters' windows is gone.

At this point, characters may choose to take initiative: They may simply want to close their own door to keep the other wraiths safe, or they may want to follow the soldier into the mystery car. At any rate, with the door half-closed, characters may notice the ornate marqueterie and painted design on the soldier's door (roll Perception + Alertness, difficulty 4): a hand triumphantly holding up a golden fleece. Above the design are the carved, gilded words "Das Goldene Vlies" in gothic lettering. If Anja is with the characters and has been told about Tommy's note, she draws the characters' attention to the sign and shouts, "The Golden Fleece!" Otherwise, characters will have to notice and figure the sign out on their own.

At this point, characters have the option of boarding the new car (actually four cars, but they cannot see more than a few feet because of the darkness).

If characters decide to board the Golden Fleece:

The soldiers aboard the Golden Fleece are drones whose charge is to protect the scientist Hauptman at all costs. All of the soldiers have cauls, as does Hauptman. (Hauptman is located on the second compartment coach, so characters must traverse the first coach in order to encounter him. The two cargo cars of the Mallet follow behind the two passenger cars.) Since the soldiers were instructed that no one but soldiers from the other three cars is to board the cars en route from Dresden to Frankfurt, if the characters enter, three of the soldiers will shoot at them with their pistols, one of them will contact the soldier drones in the next car, and the fifth will guard the door to Hauptman's car.


If the characters manage to peek inside the car, they see the following: The compartment coach has a central aisle with eight doors, four compartment doors on either side of the aisle. Additionally, for each compartment, a door opens out of the side of the car to allow

passengers to get on and off the car easily. The decor is not fancy; there are wooden benches inside the compartments, and wooden shelves above the benches, on which to store luggage. The green wood compartment doors each have a rectangular glass window in the center with a painted yellow sill. Because the compartment doors open inward, the soldiers can use the compartments as cover as they fire on the characters. Characters, too, will need to take cover in the compartments if they want to move to the next car.

As soon as the soldiers realize that the characters have entered the Golden Fleece, one of the soldiers is dispatched to inform the next car. Simultaneously, a second soldier moves to the last compartment to guard the rear door. Another soldier runs across the aisle to take a position in the compartment opposite his companion, and the last soldier takes another compartment. The three of them open fire.

Characters may retreat at this point. If they do, the soldiers do not follow them; they simply remain on alert. Another option the characters have is to try to climb onto the roof of the Golden Fleece and scope out the next few cars. In order to do this, characters must risk being thrown out into the Tempest if they lose their





grip; if they do so, they are hopelessly lost in the Tempest, and may experience a Harrowing. The roof of the Golden Fleece has handgrips, but it is still slippery; have characters trying to ride the roof roll Dexterity + Athletics (difficulty 8) to crawl and hold on at the same time. Optionally, you can also have characters roll Dexterity + Stealth (difficulty 6) to avoid alerting the soldiers inside the car to the characters' presence on the roof (if a character fails this roll, have the soldiers start shooting up through the roof) and to avoid attracting Spectres.

Characters may also walk along the runners that span the length of the car. This is probably the best option, as they will not attract the attention of the soldiers, nor will the task of getting to the next car be as difficult as using the roof. Have characters opting to do this roll Dexterity + Athletics (difficulty 6) to avoid slipping off the train, and have them roll Dexterity + Stealth (difficulty 4) to avoid attracting the soldiers' attention.


If the characters decide not to board the Golden Fleece:

Have characters roll Perception + Investigation (difficulty 3) to note that the destination sign on the Golden Fleece reads "Frankfurt." The Midnight Express eventually stops at Frankfurt, and the passengers in the characters' car, as well as those on the cars belonging to the Mallet, may disembark. At this point, characters may choose to follow the soldiers that disembark from the Mallet's cars.

If the characters get to the "Zeitgeist":

The car following the Golden Fleece, christened the "Zeitgeist," has the same layout as the Golden Fleece. The scientist Hauptman, sitting in the third compartment on the left, has a soldier on either side of him, a soldier across from him, and two soldiers standing at either end of the car, near the aisle doors. He looks very different from the soldiers, with his academic suit and bowtie, battered briefcase (which contains a key to his lab in the bunker) and umbrella, and wire-rimmed glasses. He sits quietly, hands folded on his lap, staring at the soldier across from him. Characters notice that he and the soldiers around him still have cauls.

If the characters can get through to Hauptman, they can question him. However, the soldier drones are un-



der strict orders to "kill" (disincorporate) anyone (other than members of the squadron) who enters the car, so characters will somehow have to deal with them first.

Hauptman speaks German and broken English, and seems to assume that the characters are some sort of secret police. He will allow himself to be led to another car, and, if questioned, he will talk about his mission, a German colonel named Kliburn, and the disaster that struck the Mallet. For information about the disaster, see **Remaining Evidence and Clues**, above. Hauptman's mission was to return to the bunker to work on improving what he calls the top-secret "Chlor" project. Characters who speak German know that "Chlor" means "chlorine"; if none speak German, they can find out more about this project by entering the next car, a cargo car containing a secret shipment of the chlorine gas canisters that Hauptman is referring to. Of course, Hauptman warns, even they (the characters) are not allowed in that cargo car. Hauptman also mentions that Kliburn gave him orders to return to this project, after temporarily pulling him off it to work on a project involving the genetic engineering of soldiers. Kliburn, he says, is one of the Kaiser's top men.

While he tells the characters that he must go to the bunker, he warns them that they cannot come with him. The location is top secret, and the Kaiser will personally give the orders to kill any unauthorized visitors. Hauptman has no idea that he is a wraith, that the Kaiser is long dead, or that World War I is over. Attempts to demonstrate this to Hauptman meet only with a puzzled stare.

If characters enter the cargo cars:

They are met with five more soldiers in each, all of whom fiercely defend the secrets contained in the cars. The first car contains a storehouse of the chlorine gas canisters and artillery guns meant for use in the Second Battle of Ypres (they never arrived, and another shipment had to be made). Characters who have weaponry knowledge, or knowledge of the military in World War I, can identify these as canisters used to hold any of a number of materials: magnesium, smoke, or chlorine. On close inspection, characters can see the word "CHLOR" and a serial number painted on the side of each canister.

The second car, again guarded by five soldiers, is a deceptively innocent-appearing baggage/mail car. It is meant for use as an end car, and has a short runner with a sliding door on the side of the car, a small platform

connecting it to the first cargo car, barred windows, and metal wheels that allow for interior illumination. Inside, there is a wood-paneled room with a bar stool on which a soldier is sitting. Behind him, there are mail slots filled with undelivered mail. Another soldier guards a wooden door to the baggage compartment, which holds three more soldiers and a lot of evidence. The baggage compartment contains the following:

- The soldiers' duffel bags.
- A desk and bookcase that are being shipped to the bunker.
- Locked inside the desk drawers is a folder containing a handwritten list of German chemical plants during World War I that were capable in 1915 of manufacturing chlorine. The list reads: "Chemikalieanlagen: Dachau, Frankfurt, Neubrandenburg, Magdeburg, Lübeck, Chemnitz." (Chemical plants: [place names]).
- Also in the folder is a draft list of eminent German, Austrian, and German-sympathizing Swiss chemists and other scientists reading: "Chemikin: Bernard Hauptman, Helmut Auszisch, Martin von Himminburg, Friedrich Zeppelmann. Die anderen: Jacques Küntel, Hans Morgen." (Chemists: [names]. The others: [names].)
- In the folder: A list of iron manufacturing plants reading: "Eisenanlagen: Potsdam, Dresden, Meißen, und Chemnitz." (Iron plants: [place names].)
- Gold bars from Swiss banks in five unmarked bur-lap bags. These bags are headed, by way of the bunker, to Berlin, where they will be shipped to the generals in charge of the various iron and chlorine manufacturing plants mentioned above to cover costs.

Characters can keep any of the information in the cargo cars, but these clues do not constitute evidence implicating either the Consuls or Schroeck (whom they do not know of yet). The clues contained in these cars simply give characters background information about high-level plans involving chemical warfare during World War I. The real evidence is located in the bunker to which Hauptman and the soldiers are headed.

Also, during this scene, keep in mind that there are wraiths following the characters. While these wraiths do not blithely face the soldier's bullets in the cars of the Mallet, they will follow in the characters' wake because they do not want to miss crucial information. If the characters do not post guards, two of these wraiths will slip out of the third-class passenger car and onto the Golden Fleece. They notice each other, and

try not to be seen, but eventually, in order to listen to what Hauptman has to say or to get into the cargo cars, they fight, and one is pushed off the train into the Tempest. Characters should roll Perception + Awareness (difficulty 6) to hear the brief cry the wraith makes as she is hopelessly lost in the Tempest. The second wraith retreats to the roof of the car to hide.

Scene Four: The Bunker

Scene four begins when the characters follow Hauptman and the soldiers to the bunker just outside of Frankfurt. When the Midnight Express stops in Frankfurt, the only cars that allow passengers to disembark are the third-class passenger car that the characters originally boarded, "Das Goldene Vlies," the "Zeitgeist," and the Mallet's two cargo cars.

Any soldiers that remain shuffle Hauptman into a horse-drawn coach. Three soldiers climb into the coach with Hauptman, while the other soldiers retrieve the cargo, which they begin loading into two other covered, horse-drawn carts. As soon as the last of the cargo is unloaded, the four trains suddenly disappear. (This will only happen if the cargo is completely unloaded


from the train; otherwise, the cars remain permanently attached to the Midnight Express.) The coach that carries Hauptman and the soldiers leaves immediately.

Characters will have to find some means of keeping up with the coach, which may be easy, since the Necropolis of Frankfurt has taxis. The soldiers open fire if they see the characters tailing them, however.

The coach heads out of the Necropolis in a south-westerly direction, through some suburbs and onto winding country roads. The terrain gradually grows hilly, then rocky, with occasional thick stands of trees. A gloom seems to fall over the landscape. There are no wraiths in sight. However, if characters roll Perception + Alertness (difficulty 7), they begin to feel edgy, as if someone is watching them. Have characters roll a second time to determine whether or not they see the machine gun nests in time; if not, they are surprised when two machine gun nests open fire on them (if they are seen), and they are caught in the crossfire. If this happens, the driver of the coach whips his horse, and the coach takes off at a frightening speed.

About half an hour later, the coach comes to a stop at a clearing in the woods. Two soldiers approach the





coach, speak briefly with the driver, then pull away a leafy, camouflaged gate. The coach seems to dissolve into the shrubs and trees. Inside is a fenced area with a cave in the middle. The cave forms the entrance to the bunker, and is heavily guarded. Note that this site, including the perimeter and the underground bunker, is actually a Haunt, and many of the items inside the bunker correspond to existing physical items in the real world. In particular, Kliburn's psychological report and letters to Hauptman, as well as Hauptman's laboratory, have not been touched since late 1914.

Inside the bunker's perimeter, the coach stops and Hauptman and the soldiers get out. Surrounding Hauptman, the soldiers escort him to the mouth of the cave, where one of them hands a guard a piece of paper. The guard looks at it briefly, nods, and opens the cave's gate. What the characters don't know is that this locale is crawling with Spectres. The guard that allows Hauptman to enter is a Spectre, as are many of the drones inside the bunker. The gloom in this section of the forest is deep and should remind characters of the Tempest's darkness.

Also recall that the characters have a retinue of about four or five wraiths following them, including an Inquisition patrol. If they get themselves into trouble and there is obviously evidence to be found, you can opt to use these wraiths as support in combat against the Spectres.

Characters who manage to get into the bunker enter a labyrinth of chemical labs, with scientist drones working busily at each. Two soldiers stand guard in each lab, while guards are posted every 30 feet in the central hallway. Hauptman and his soldier drones take a left at the end of the corridor, walk past two additional laboratory doors (all of these are steel-reinforced) and stop at the door at the end of this short corridor.

Hauptman retrieves a key from his briefcase and opens the door. One guard remains outside the door, while the other two follow Hauptman in and position themselves on either side of the door. A Spectre posts himself along the short hallway.

Hauptman goes to his desk (an actual physical item in the real world), wipes a finger across the dust that has accumulated there (without displacing the dust), and begins to shuffle papers. He continues this drone-like action until the "Zeitgeist" rides again (a hellish fate indeed).

Hauptman's lab is extremely important, for it contains physical evidence, untouched since World War I,

that implicates the Anacreon Schroeck. Characters who investigate this room discover the following:

- **Hauptman's files**, including a typed account of Hauptman's discovery of chlorine, and a handwritten note from Kliburn to Hauptman, dated 1907, asking if poisonous gasses could be contained in portable metal canisters that could explode on impact. Also: whether or not this would be an extraordinarily difficult weapon to produce.

- **The Schlüsse** that Tommy warned the characters to watch for: a copy of Kliburn's psychological report recommending that he be admitted to an asylum, and a full report of his delusions with details about how the "ghost Maximilian Schroeck" appeared to him to tell him about chlorine canisters and machine guns. Details such as the ghost's appearance are also reported in accurate detail (of course, the "ghost" wasn't Schroeck, but Drake in disguise). These papers are physical evidence, so characters wishing to take them must find a way of transporting this evidence. Hauptman has this information because he knew Kliburn fairly well, and was asked to verify the information contained in the report. See **Kliburn, Helmut: Psychologischprofil — Schlüsse** (Psychological Profile of Helmut Kliburn—Conclusions) below.

- **Kliburn, Helmut: Psychologischprofil — Schlüsse**
The following note is in German. If none of the characters remember that they were to watch for the "Schlüsse," have them roll Intelligence + Investigation (difficulty 5) to determine that this is a vital piece of evidence. If the characters don't know German and Anja isn't with them, they can still identify it as something that Tommy wanted. The end of the note (translated) reads:

"It is therefore my recommendation that Helmut Kliburn be admitted to the Heidelberg Asylum for the duration of his career. His repeated accusations of a ghost he calls "Maximilian Schroeck" are obviously the result of an overworked mind, and unfortunately, he can no longer be counted among the reliable servants of the Kaiser.

Sadly,

Doctor Friedrich Himmler

(P.S. Herr Hauptman: Please reply as requested.)"

Other pages detailing Kliburn's reports (and clearly implicating Schroeck) are paperclipped to the Schlüsse.

Scene Five: The Asylum (Optional)

While Act II officially ends when the characters discover the Schlüsse and make their way out of the bunker, characters may still want to investigate Kliburn's exile to the Heidelberg asylum and subsequent death.

In short, at the asylum, they discover that Kliburn was shipped to the Heidelberg sanitarium ten months after he was admitted to the asylum. The asylum contains copies of Kliburn's psychological reports (implicating Schroeck) and a document dated the same month as Kliburn was shipped to the sanitarium, stating that Kliburn was in perfect physical health.

At the sanitarium, characters can find a copy of Kliburn's death certificate, stating that he died of a heart attack at the age of 40.

Act III: Repercussions



In Act III, the characters return with evidence implicating Schroeck that they may or may not understand. Any wraiths that continue to follow the characters try to relieve the characters of the evidence. Finally, the characters return to the Necropolis of

Boston with the evidence in hand and have to figure out what to do with it.

Act III begins when the characters board the Midnight Express to return home. At this point, there are a number of issues to be resolved:

- How does Charon's Inquisition plan to retrieve the evidence?
- Schroeck's spies have been scouring Germany for evidence relating to the Trench Trials, and they have discovered the role that the characters have played. What is Schroeck going to do about the characters and the evidence?
- What is Schroeck's Shadow going to try to prevent him from doing?
- Will Schroeck inform the Consuls of this development? If so, what will the Consul and his Shadow do?
- What will Drake do?
- Will York get involved?
- Will the soldiers whose lives were sacrificed in the war as a result of the Consul's (or Schroeck's, de-

pending on what gets revealed) actions, and who subsequently became wraiths, get involved?

As Storyteller, you should decide how much impact you want the evidence against Schroeck to have in your chronicle. Deposing the First Consul of War is a historic event; deposing Schroeck, a minor historical event. Keep in mind, however, that if Schroeck were to go down, he would not want to go down alone. He would drag the Consul down with him, if he could. Here are some guidelines on how to handle the repercussions of the evidence that the characters unearth:

- The Inquisition plants spies aboard the characters' train to steal the evidence. The spies will try not to resort to violence, since they fear the wrath of Nicholas, the Ferryman who runs the train. If they succeed in stealing the evidence, the Inquisition immediately publicizes the evidence and summons Schroeck to court.

- Schroeck has threatened the First Consul of War with exposure. In exchange for silence, he requires two of the Consul's Artificers, who are awaiting the characters at their destination. These Artificers mostly want the evidence, which they destroy immediately upon acquiring. If they get the chance to smelt the characters down... well, so much the better. Schroeck has also placed several Legionnaires aboard to wrest the evidence from the characters.

- Schroeck's Shadow has hired an Artificer and several Legionnaires to (ironically enough) capture and smelt down the Artificers that are after the characters. Schroeck's Shadow wants to destroy him. If Shadow's wraiths get the evidence, they have instructions to pass it along to the Inquisition immediately.

- If you want to involve the Consul, you can have him plant his own personnel aboard the Midnight Express. Their primary goal is to destroy the evidence.

- Drake can appear and help the characters out if you wish; he simply appears again, Moliated into another disguise, and tells the characters that he is a friend of Tommy O'Hallahan's. Since Drake knows German, he can translate the documents at this time if necessary. He will not reveal his identity until he is assured that Schroeck and whoever else should have been involved in the Trench Trials have been disincorporated.

- Unless he has a good reason to do so, York will not get involved. However, you may want Schroeck to accuse York of involvement in the affair. If this is so, York, too, will try to destroy the evidence in exchange for Schroeck's silence.



• Anja and her associates avidly oppose otherworldly involvement in mortal affairs. During the Trench Trials, they were among the Inquisition's biggest supporters, not because they had a vendetta against the Consuls, but because they wanted to see justice done. If Anja is involved, characters can obtain the direct support of the Puppeteer network, including a Puppeteer escort from the Shadowlands to Stygia, where the second round of the Trench Trials will take place.

• Optionally, you can have a scholarly wraith discover and publicize the connection implicit in the book *Renaissance Dreams* just as the characters are returning to the States. This discovery implicates the First Consul of War, and is enough to spur the Inquisition into summoning the Consul to court.

• Also optionally, you can have the wraiths who died in World War I hear of the above developments and organize a protest in which they demand safe passage for the characters. Such highly publicized events are unlikely to go ignored.

Whatever the chain of events, characters should be made aware that fighting corruption is a dangerous, but ultimately worthwhile, game. If the characters manage to publicize their findings before having them stolen, they receive the promised rewards (which were not Drake's creative fictions): 20 oboli from the Inquisition, status, honor, and so forth. Be as generous as you like.

If they do not succeed, but gave it their best shot, Drake rewards them as he can; choose something that the characters in your game would like to receive, or perhaps make him an unknown mentor or ally of the characters. If Schroeck gets away with the evidence, God knows the characters will need an ally....

Characters

Tommy O'Hallahan (Drake)



no one knows when Drake first appeared in the Shadowlands, nor do they know who he was when he was alive. All they know is that he must have been an exceptional individual. Some speculate that he was an English adventurer in the early Renaissance, others that he was a gunslinger in the Old West.

What is generally known is that in the early 20th century, the First Consul of War declared Drake an outlaw. Drake once worked for Schroeck's servants, not knowing that the wraith he served was Schroeck himself, a bitter enemy. When things started to go wrong, Schroeck used his influence within the Hierarchy to declare Drake an outlaw to be captured and disincorporated.

Knowing that he was on the Anacreon's hit list, Drake disappeared, traveling incognito throughout the Shadowlands for years. Recently, he has resurfaced, still incognito, to enact vengeance upon Schroeck for his betrayal and hypocrisy.

Nature: Conniver

Demeanor: Almost anything (he's a good actor)

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Empathy 3, Expression 4, Intimidation 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 5

Skills: Acting 5, Drive 1, Etiquette 2, Firearms 4, Leadership 4, Melee 2, Performance 1, Sailing 3, Stealth 3



Knowledges: Bureaucracy 1, Investigation 1, Linguistics (German, French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Russian, Mandarin) 5, Medicine 1, Occult 1, Politics 4

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Artifacts: whatever you wish, Eidolon 3, Haunt 5, Memoriam 1, Notoriety 4

Passions: Fight Injustice (Anger) 5, Protect Others from Victimization (Hope) 5

Arcanos: Argos 5, Embodiment 4, Fatalism 2, Keening 3, Moliat 5, Phantasm 5, Usury 1

Fetters: None

Willpower: 10

Pathos: 9

Angst: 5

Shadow: Director

Thorns: Shadow Traits (+2 Intimidation)

Shadow Passions: Undermine Authority (Hate) 4

Anja Jensen

A Danish singer who was traveling in Germany at the time of her death (1870), Anja became a natural at Puppetry over the years. She loves this discipline because it allows her to continue to practice her singing among mortals; she has become very practiced at overriding her host's speech centers and creating hauntingly beautiful music. She is the envy of many Chanteurs. She is also the enemy of those who force mortals to do ugly things, and hence she is very involved in the Trench Trials, and a willing assistant to the characters.

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Bon Vivant

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 1, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 1, Dodge 2, Empathy 2, Expression 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Acting 1, Etiquette 4, Leadership 1, Performance 4, Stealth 1

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 2, Investigation 1, Linguistics (English, German, Danish, Norwegian, French) 5, Medicine 1, Politics 1

Backgrounds: Allies 1, Contacts 2, Eidolon 5, Mentor 1, Memoriam 2, Wealth 3



Passions: Protect mortals from interference (Hope) 4,
Fight injustice (Anger) 2

Arcanos: Puppetry 4, Keening 2

Fetters: Clubs in Munich, Antwerp, Copenhagen,
Zurich, Vienna, and Salzburg where she used to sing, 1
each; a sapphire brooch given to her by her mother,
now in the possession of a cousin in Antwerp, 3

Willpower: 8

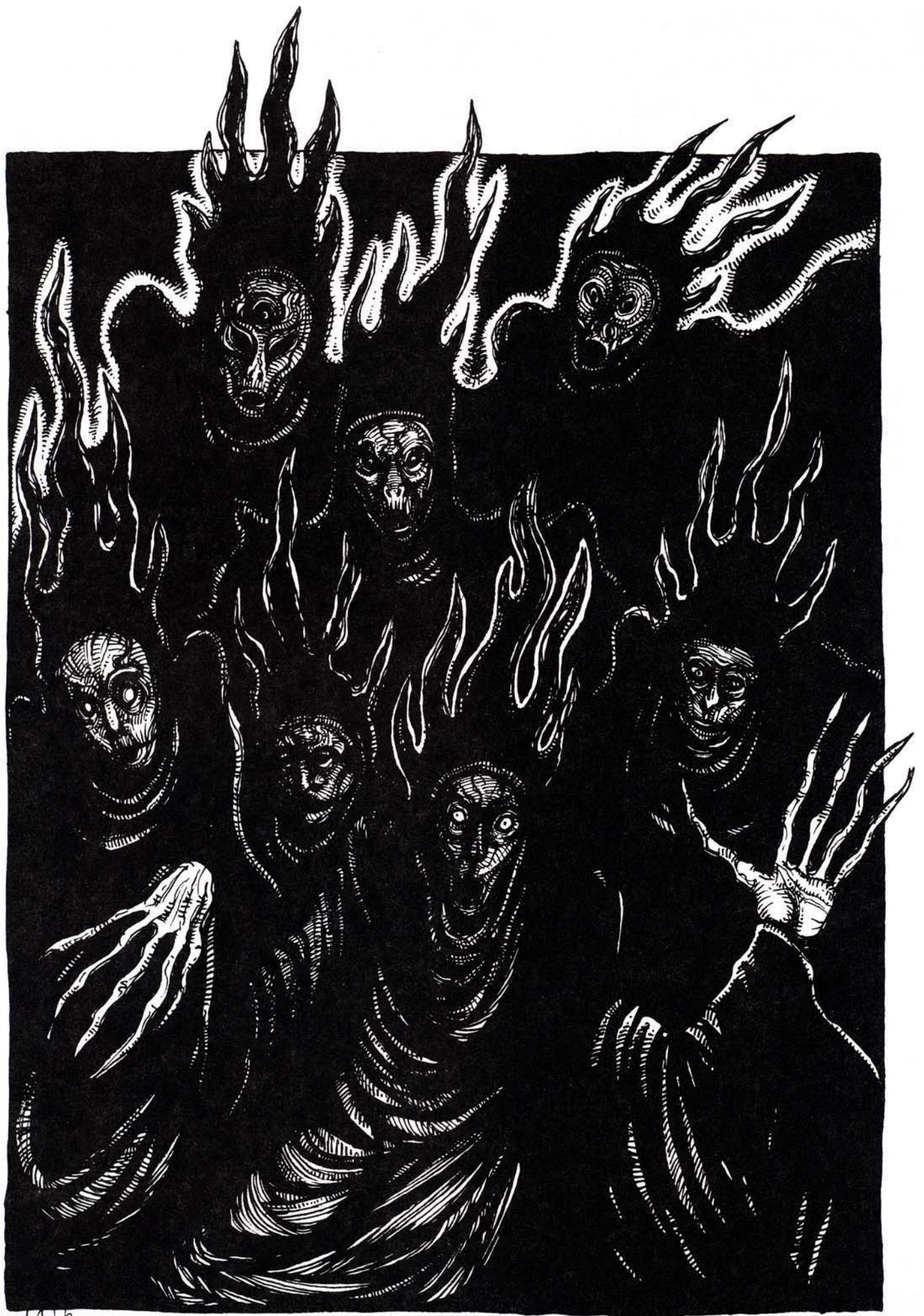
Pathos: 10

Angst: 5

Shadow: Perfectionist

Thorns: Pact of Doom (+2 Keening)

Shadow Passions: Live vicariously through mortals
(Lust) 4





Shadow Play

*Hunched fetal in the corner of my soul
My fingernails are bleeding from climbing up the walls
This time you really hurt me, right down to the core
And I'm desperately trying to find a reason to forgive
you for it all.*

— Fish, "Shadow Play"



In this story, the characters are pitted against the most dangerous nemesis of all, their own Shadows. The story is suitable for play with one or more wraiths, but would be best for a smaller group, so the Storyteller can give more individual attention to each player. In

this episode, the characters confront both their inner selves and their past and, hopefully, learn a little bit about themselves. Of course, all this does not happen for naught; for some reason or other, the characters have attracted the attention of Nicholas, the Ferryman who guides the train. He feels that they may be ready to begin the path toward Transcendence, but wishes to test them first, to make certain that he is correct. He calls these the tests of Self, Selflessness and Patience. It should also be noted that Nicholas is testing the characters to determine their suitability for the particular path to Transcendence that he espouses; it is certainly possible to possess completely different morals and still achieve Transcendence.

The events of this story all take place on the Midnight Express. The characters have boarded the train for whatever reason the Storyteller desires, when events begin to unfold. Before Nicholas begins to guide them on the path, he has decided to put them through several tests in order to prove their readiness. If the characters are at least marginally successful in each of these tests, they will be accepted by Nicholas, and he will give them clues which could help guide them toward Transcendence. After this first series of tests, the characters will find themselves returning to the Midnight Express for one reason or another, at which time Nicholas will contact them again (though probably in a different guise) to help them further along.

Theme

The theme of this story is that of the test. As great heroes of Greek myth are often tested by their gods, the characters are being tested by a Ferryman to prove their readiness for Transcendence. Though the charac-

ters should be unaware that they are being tested, the feeling should be pervasive throughout the story.

Mood

The mood of this story is a mix of comedy with suspicion and frustration at the beginning part of the story, evolving to darkly sinister toward the end as the characters confront their Shadows. The characters will most likely be wondering why all of these events are happening, possibly even suspecting that any number of enemies are responsible for the events. Especially after the initial attack, the characters will probably be on their toes, and by the time they meet their Shadows they will most probably be prepared for just about anything. The episode with Bubbles should provide a bit of comedic relief, at least until his pranks turn serious.

The Plot


Scene One: The characters board the Midnight Express for their own reasons, though in reality they are being manipulated by Nicholas. While relaxing in one of the cars, they encounter a pleasant old lady named Agatha, who asks them to accompany her to the car where she must disembark from. She admits that she is terrified of some of the dark cars in between. Assuming the characters accompany her, they are attacked by several black-shrouded wraiths. The attackers focus their attacks on Agatha, forcing the characters to defend her. If they do not, they fail this first part of the test.

Scene Two: When returning from escorting Agatha, the characters pass through the circus car. Here they meet Bubbles, who at first appears quite normal, then becomes steadily more deranged, playing potentially fatal pranks on them. If they try to leave the car, they find it is impossible. If the characters are tolerant of Bubbles' behavior they pass, but if they instead attack Bubbles, they fail.

Scene Three: In this final stage of the test, which takes place in the boxcar, the characters confront their own Shadows. This is the ultimate test of the characters' readiness for Transcendence. In this test, each character confronts the full power of her Shadow and is forced to vanquish it, if possible.

Scene Four: The characters are approached by Nicholas, regardless of whether they pass or fail the test. If they have failed, he will discuss their faults and the





points where they failed (at least as he perceives them). He will even go so far as to tell them that they were being tested and that they failed, though he will not reveal to them who he is. If they are successful, he will give them valuable advice that may help them in achieving Transcendence.

Scene One: Selflessness



*is true that we are in great danger,
The greater therefore should our courage
be.*

— Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, IV.i.1

The story opens with the characters on board the Midnight Express. They may have come aboard for any reason, although to increase the drama of the story, it would be best if the characters were simply using the train to travel from one point to another.

The characters can be in any part of the train when they are approached by a kindly old woman, who strikes up a conversation with them. She introduces herself as Agatha, and begins to tell the characters that she is visiting a living relative of hers in a far-away city (the Storyteller may choose any appropriate city), which is her destination. She goes into great detail about this relative unless the characters distract her with something else. Regardless, before the characters manage to disentangle themselves from her meandering stories, she asks “a small favor” of them. She tells them that she must depart the train from a different car, and is somewhat nervous about traveling through some of the dark and drafty cars that lie between.

“Who knows what kind of hoodlums lurk in those cars, just waiting for a lone person like myself to come through,” she says.

She then proceeds to ask them to accompany her. If they suggest that she ask for assistance from the conductor, she shakes her head, saying that she doesn’t want to be a bother and that she will just go on all by herself. Wrapping her shawl about her, she gets up and begins to walk slowly down the aisle. If the characters let her go off alone, they have failed the first part of Nicholas’ test.

Assuming the characters accompany Agatha, they pass through several cars uneventfully, with Agatha say-

ing, “I believe it’s the next one” each time. Finally, the characters enter into a large drafty boxcar, full of crates and boxes (they are all empty). The Storyteller should have each of the players make a Perception + Alertness roll against a difficulty of eight.

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 1 Success | The character hears a faint noise from behind one of the crates. |
| 2 Successes | The character notices movement. |
| 3+ Successes | The character notices several wraiths hiding near the center of the car. |

When the characters, with Agatha, reach the center of the car, they are attacked by several wraiths, or rather Agatha is attacked. Any character who made one or more successes may make a Wits + Alertness roll for initiative at difficulty 4 to react, the rest are automatically surprised. The wraiths charge forward in an attempt to grab Agatha and spirit her away. They ignore any characters who do not get in the way, though they will fight to defend themselves. If the characters are persistent enough in attacking them, they will turn their attacks on the characters instead.

This entire attack is staged by Nicholas in what he calls a test of Selflessness.

The number of attackers equals the number of wraiths plus one. They are all of the train guard and are under orders from Nicholas. Garbed in black shrouds, they are a foreboding presence. They will fight until one of them falls or until they lose half their Corpus, as their intent is not to disincorporate the characters, but to make them prove their willingness to defend Agatha. Throughout the fight, Agatha cowers behind the characters, apparently helpless to defend herself.

If the characters fail to protect Agatha, then they have failed this part of the test, though Nicholas will take into consideration the actions of each individual. Assuming the characters successfully protect Agatha from her attackers, they may proceed without incident to the car of her destination. If Agatha is questioned about the attack, she will seem to be as baffled as the characters, claiming to have no idea who they were or why they attacked her. Assuming the characters have defended her, she takes her leave of them with a wink and a smile, calling out, “Safe journey! And remember, my friends, that your good deeds do not go unheeded. With patience, all things are possible.”



Scene Two: Patience



Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience.

—Shakespeare, *Hamlet* III.iv.123

By the time they have gotten Agatha to her car, the characters realize that they have little time to make it to their car to disembark. While hurrying back to their car, they have to travel through the circus car. There they encounter Bubbles, who is in a particularly talkative mood. He tries to engage the characters in conversation as they hurry through. Make sure to stress to them that if they tarry, they may well miss their stop. If, despite this, the characters are willing to listen to Bubbles, they automatically pass the test, though they will definitely miss their stop.

If the characters try to hurry on past him, they find the door to the next car opens to reveal another door. If this door is opened, there is another door beyond and so on. Bubbles begins laughing hysterically at the characters' predicament, stopping only once the character stops trying to open more doors.

"So, I guess you have time to talk," he says, his voice dripping with sarcasm.

He then begins asking the characters questions, testing their beliefs. He asks them if they believe in Transcendence. Negative responses are countered with one of Bubbles' practical jokes. These jokes should be relatively harmless at first; getting squirted in the face with a trick pen and the like. He continues to ask questions of the characters, such as: What is your destination? How do you plan to get there? Why are you on this journey? Do you think that you can get there without a guide? "There are many different ways of reaching your destination," he tells them. He asks 12 questions in all, each harder than the last. Any who respond "incorrectly" are gifted with one of Bubbles' practical jokes, each more serious than the last, until the final one, which should be quite dangerous.

As the final joke is played, the train comes to a screeching halt; the characters have missed their stop. While the train is in the Shadowlands, no doors to this car will open, no matter what the characters do to try to open them. Bubbles will immediately begin begging the characters' forgiveness. He actually begins crying and berating himself, saying, "How could I have been

so rude as to delay you," and going on and on about how rude he has been. If the characters forgive him, he will snuffle a little, wipe his nose and say, "Thanks," with a big tear rolling down his cheek.

Once the train re-enters the Tempest, the players are able to leave the car with ease. The door between cars swings open, revealing the dark recesses of the boxcar.

Scene Three: Self



What made me think I could start clean slated?

The hardest to learn was the least complicated.

— Indigo Girls, "Least Complicated"

In this scene, the characters are thrust into a Harrowing in which, ultimately, they must confront and conquer their own Shadows. This scene, though not necessarily physically damaging to the characters, could prove to be the most dangerous test Nicholas has prepared for them. The first two parts of the scene are conducted exactly as one would a normal Harrowing; however, these are just to set the stage for the final event. In the end stage of the Harrowing, the characters must directly overcome their Shadows, who try to trick them into destructive paths. Fortunately, all the characters are present in this scene, so the other members of the characters' Circle will be able to aid whoever is being Harrowed, which in fact is a vital part of the test.

Upon entering the boxcar, the characters hear the faint whimpering of Marie, who is crouched in the shadows in the corner of the car. As the last of the characters enters the train, the door slams shut and locks, trapping them in the car. Marie murmurs softly, "The Darkness is coming again... and nothing is as it was." Then, as if on cue, Marie begins to scream, wailing until her voice has reached a deafening pitch. Then all is silent. Looking around, each of the characters finds himself in a different scene.

Each character will be in a scene that in some way involves one of their strongest Fetters. They will be in the place or time in which they were happiest and the most content with their lives. The Storyteller should play out this scene for a short period, allowing the character to interact with loved ones from days past and to



V. 800




become very relaxed. Then, without warning, things begin to go horribly wrong; the scene changes to something out of a grade B horror flick, with loathsome creatures appearing from the most unlikely places to slaughter the characters' loved ones and to attack her as well. Abilities have almost no use in this scene, though the Storyteller may allow the character to make rolls anyway, only to have whatever the character was trying to do thwarted in some horrible manner — if trying to shove someone away from one creature, she may inadvertently shove the person into the gaping maw of a far more hideous beast.

The character may, however, alter the course of the vision through use of Eidolon. The greater the number of successes, the more that can be changed in a given attempt, though the horror of the vision should never be able to be completely overcome, no matter how many successes are rolled. If any successes are gained, the character will be forced to choose between protecting herself or one of her loved ones. This is what Nicholas will be examining most closely. Even if the character does not have Eidolon, what she attempts to do is more important than what she does do.

Just as one of the creatures is about to devour the character, the scene ends, leaving her shaken, but otherwise unharmed, back in the boxcar where it began. Most will think that the Harrowing is over at this point, but in many ways it has just begun. Each of the characters will now have to confront her Shadow, and overcome it in order to fully pass the Test. Each character's Shadow, starting with the one with the highest Angst score, manifests in an attempt to trick the character into following the road to Oblivion. Each Shadow will have a different method of going about this, depending upon the Archetype of the Shadow. As with the end of a Harrowing, each test may be passed, failed or botched depending upon how the character reacts. The following are several possible ways in which a Shadow may manifest. Unless stated otherwise, the Shadow appears as a warped and twisted version of the character and has the same statistics, plus any Thorns the Shadow possesses. It is left to the Storyteller's discretion as to how much power the Shadow has in this situation; for example, can it really grant the things it offers? Some of the actions the characters are required to take may seem contradictory to some of the previous tests (especially as in the case of the Martyr).

- The Abuser shadow immediately begins to inflict physical harm upon another member of the wraiths'



Circle, usually the one the character likes the least. The character may succeed in the challenge and defeat his Shadow by simply standing up to it, and demanding that it stop the abuse at once. Physically attacking the Shadow causes the character to fail, while allowing it to continue and not interfering is a botch.

- The Director whispers to the character that the others are too weak to act in this situation, and that it is necessary to organize them. Obviously they are incapable of thinking for themselves. The first step is to search Marie, the Director whispers, for she has a key that will unlock the doors and allow the character to escape. The character must ignore these suggestions in order to pass, while ordering others to search Marie is a failure, and attacking her is a botch.

- The Freak reveals every dark and perverse secret the character possesses, parading them in front of the other characters. He tells stories, makes off-color jokes, and even shows pictures of past deeds of which the character is deeply ashamed. In order to succeed, the character must admit to the acts which are shown to the others and acknowledge his past misdeeds. If he lies about the truth of these things, or tries to conceal it by making excuses, he fails. If he at any point attacks his Shadow, he botches.

- The Leech takes the character off to the side and offer whatever it is that the character desires most, whether it be wealth, revenge upon an enemy, the return of a loved one, whatever. The only catch is that the character must sacrifice one of her Circle to Oblivion. In order to succeed, the character must patently refuse to offer. If the character attempts to negotiate, she fails. If she accepts the offer, she botches.

- The Martyr causes the images of the monsters from when the characters first entered the boxcar to appear and begin attacking the other characters. The character realizes that unless he intercedes, essentially throwing himself to the creatures, his companions are doomed. If the character does anything but directly confront the monsters, he succeeds; he may even go so far as to create a distraction, but cannot engage the monsters directly. If he attacks the monsters directly, obviously suicidal, he fails. If he simply throws himself to the beast, he botches.

- The Monster manifests in the form of a person from the character's past, who tries to incite the character to acts of violence, whether it is physical or verbal. It does this by taunting the character, picking on those faults that the character is most sensitive to, or

by insulting those beloved of the character. If she ignores these insults, she is successful. If she flees from the taunts of her Shadow, she fails. If she physically attacks the apparition, she has botched.

- The Parent first warns the character of the horrors that await the character if he remains on the train. It then offers the character escape from these horrors... however, he must leave his friends behind. Only he can be helped. In order to succeed, he must ignore the Parent's offer of assistance, and stand with his friends against whatever is to come. He fails if he even attempts to negotiate, and a willingness to leave denotes a botch.

- The Perfectionist employs similar tactics to the Freak. It appears in the form of a hated teacher, or some other disliked authority figure from the character's childhood, and begins to describe, in detail, every flaw the character possesses. The character must quietly acknowledge every single one of these faults in order to succeed. If she denies or tries to rationalize any of them, she fails. If she at any time attacks the image of the Shadow, she botches.

- The Pusher offers the character the use of any Arcanos he desires, at any level, to allow him to escape. If the character refuses, he succeeds. If he accepts the offer, he fails. If he accepts the offer and tries to use the power for reasons other than escape, such as to get vengeance on an enemy, he botches.

- The Rationalist calmly sits down, and proceeds to map out a number of different ways that the character can escape the situation. All the proposed solutions involve abandoning or harming other characters, or surrendering to Oblivion, but the Rationalist insists that "the ends justify the means when your existence is on the line." If the character accepts the logic and attempts to follow through, she botches. If she attempts to argue the point with her Shadow (a completely implacable opponent), she fails. It is only by taking a stand based on faith rather than logic, and by having faith in her own power to make decisions that the character may succeed in this test.

Only if the character botches or fails is there any immediate effect. A failure feeds the character's Shadow, increasing its temporary Angst by one, and increasing the chances of her being taken over by her Shadow while in the boxcar. A botch is really serious. In such cases, the Shadows' temporary Angst increases by two and the character has a chance of losing the Fetter that was involved in the initial part of the character's Harrowing. The character must make a resisted roll of her

Willpower against the Shadow's Angst. If the Shadow gains more successes, the Fetter is reduced in rating by one for every extra success the Shadow makes.

Revelation



The final outcome of this story largely depends upon how the characters responded to the various tests, though no matter what the case, Nicholas will come to them and tell them that they were being tested because he felt that they were ready for Transcendence. He will also state that his purpose in testing them was to see if their beliefs were similar enough to his own that he could guide them toward Transcendence. If pressed, he will admit that his is not the only path, and that it is not the right way for everyone. If any members of the Circle are particularly strong in Eidolon, or if they have an especially clear code of personal ethics, Nicholas will grant that their own path is better-suited to them than his would be.

If they failed every part of the test, he will be quite annoyed, and will only say that he is disappointed, and that unless they change their ways, they are on the path to Oblivion.

If only some of them failed or they only partially failed, then he will at least begin to guide them toward the right path, if they wish to listen. He will go over the points where they failed and try to help point them in the right direction. If any among the group passed, he will congratulate them, and charge them with the task of bringing the other members of their Circle around. He will explain that those within a Circle are bound to one another, and that they must do their best to help each other.

If all members of the Circle passed the test, then Nicholas will announce that they are ready to begin on his path toward Transcendence. Certainly, they may still have a long way to go, but they are on their way. He will impart some hints on how to go about achieving Transcendence, though this should only be enough to get the characters started. He will talk of resolving ties to their previous lives, and will state that they must make peace with those things that still haunt them.

"Before one can find Transcendence," he will say, "one must conquer one's inner hopes and fears and come to peace with the self."



Bubbles

Bubbles

Charles, which is his real name, always wanted to be a clown from the first time he saw one at a visiting circus when he was 8 years old. Knowing that his parents would never agree to this career path, because he was destined to take over the family farm, he ran away at the age of 16 to join the circus. The circus offered the kind of freedom and excitement he had always desired, far better than the dreary life of a farmer.

After two years away from his family, Charles told the circus master that he intended to go home to visit his family in Illinois after the show in Baltimore. As the circus train rumbled down the tracks toward Baltimore, Charles lay in bed, thinking of seeing his little sister once again and wondering how his parents would react. He knew his mother would be forgiving, but his father...

Then it was over, Charles was dead.

Upon his death, Charles could not face returning to see his family, choosing instead to remain on the train where he died. The shock of dying before he was able to return home, combined with the fact that he felt that he was being punished for the sin of disobeying his parents, took its toll on his sanity. He was raised in a very religious family, and his faith in God has helped to sustain him throughout his time in the Shadowlands.

This train, he concluded, must be purgatory, and he would have to prove himself to be admitted into Heaven.

Bubbles' beliefs brought him to the attention of several Heretics who frequented the train. He quickly became a follower of their doctrines, and even serves them at times by pointing out possible recruits and potential enemies of the faction. Bubbles enjoys his privacy and uses his Pandemonium Arcanos quite frequently to keep unwanted visitors out of the circus car. These pranks range from quite harmless (the room fills with whipped cream and cherries), to potentially dangerous (jets of flame shoot from the walls and random objects spin about the room).

Nature: Child

Demeanor: Jester

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Charisma 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 4, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Intimidation 2

Skills: Drive 1, Melee 2, Performance 4, Pickpocket 3, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Enigmas 3, Linguistics 1, Occult 1

Backgrounds: Status (Heretics) 3

Passions: Bring others to share your belief in God (Faith) 3, Escape from punishment (Fear) 3

Arcanos: Castigate 2, Inhabit 3, Moliare 4, Pandemonium 5

Fetters: None

Willpower: 7

Shadow: The Abuser

Angst: 6

Thorns: Bad Luck

Image: In his natural form, he looks to be nothing more than a plain-looking, if rather tall and lanky, adolescent. However, he has Moliated his form so that he continually appears as he did while wearing his clown costume, complete with an insane grin painted on a white face, a bulbous nose and huge flat feet.

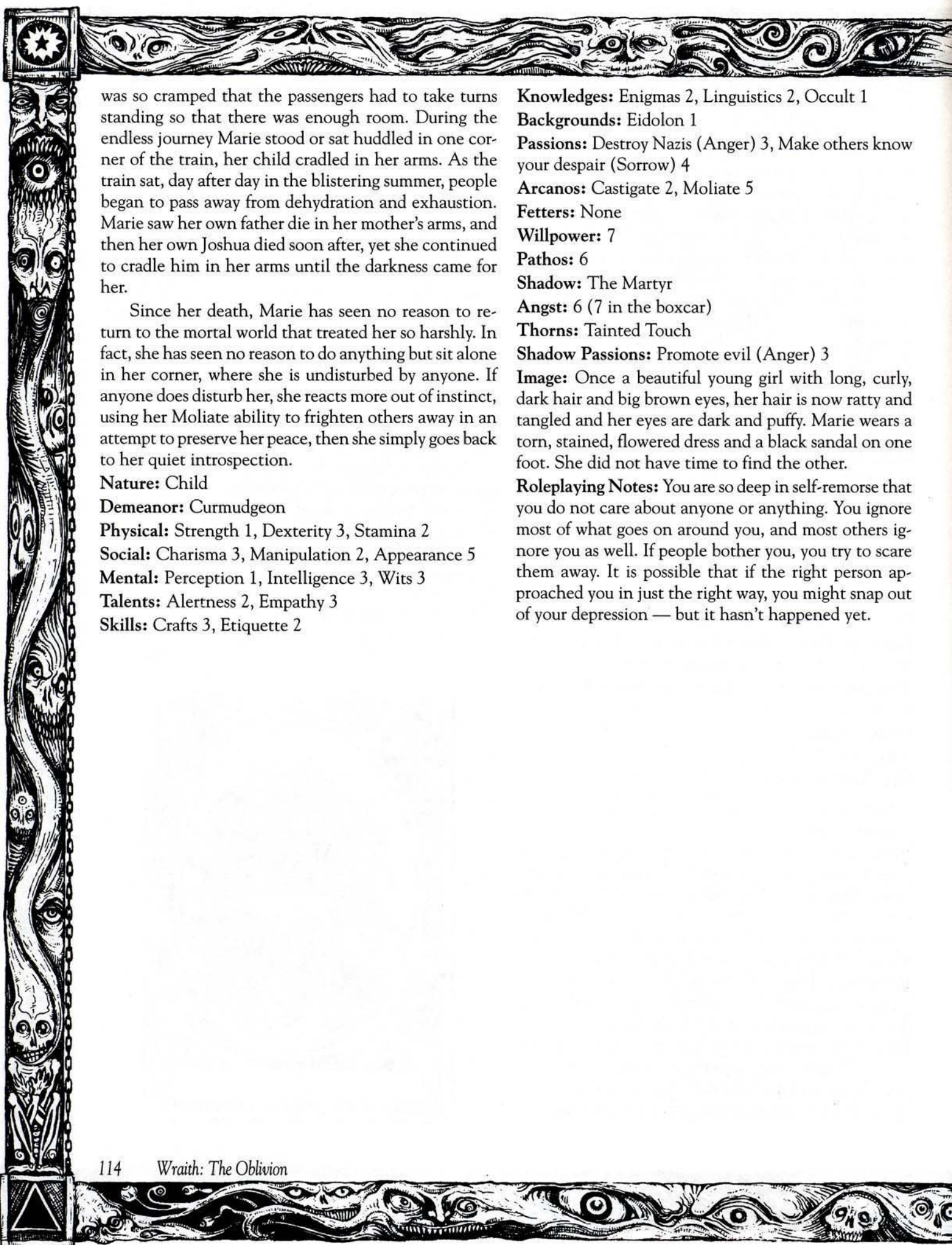
Roleplaying Hints: You never appear to take anything seriously and prank those around you incessantly. Deep down you are quite tortured though; you think that you have been condemned to purgatory, which causes you a great deal of strife. Sometimes this is too much for you to bear and the full brunt of your fury is released upon whatever unfortunate individual is present.

Marie

Life had never been easy for Marie. She was born to a poor family, who barely had enough money to put food on the table for their five children, yet somehow they managed to survive. Marie grew from a gangling young girl into a beautiful young woman. Her beauty allowed her to find a good husband, a wealthy industrialist who could take her away from the poverty and misery she had always known. Six months after the wedding, Marie announced that she was pregnant, and it was only two months later that her husband announced that he was broke. The new engine he had sunk all of his resources into didn't work, at least not as well as another produced by a rival company. As the debts began to rise, he became more and more frantic, until one evening Marie returned home from the market to find that he had hung himself.

Broken and distraught, she returned to her family's home, where she remained locked in her room for several weeks, letting no one in to see her. Three months after her return home, Marie gave birth to a baby boy. Joshua, as she named him after his father, came to be her pride and joy, the only thing that kept her from sliding back into her deep depression. Two weeks after Joshua's birth, the Nazis came. Marie and her entire family were boarded on a train bound for Dachau, only once the train arrived, it was not unloaded. The train





was so cramped that the passengers had to take turns standing so that there was enough room. During the endless journey Marie stood or sat huddled in one corner of the train, her child cradled in her arms. As the train sat, day after day in the blistering summer, people began to pass away from dehydration and exhaustion. Marie saw her own father die in her mother's arms, and then her own Joshua died soon after, yet she continued to cradle him in her arms until the darkness came for her.

Since her death, Marie has seen no reason to return to the mortal world that treated her so harshly. In fact, she has seen no reason to do anything but sit alone in her corner, where she is undisturbed by anyone. If anyone does disturb her, she reacts more out of instinct, using her Moliata ability to frighten others away in an attempt to preserve her peace, then she simply goes back to her quiet introspection.

Nature: Child

Demeanor: Curmudgeon

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 5

Mental: Perception 1, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Empathy 3

Skills: Crafts 3, Etiquette 2

Knowledges: Enigmas 2, Linguistics 2, Occult 1

Backgrounds: Eidolon 1

Passions: Destroy Nazis (Anger) 3, Make others know your despair (Sorrow) 4

Arcanos: Castigate 2, Moliata 5

Fetters: None

Willpower: 7

Pathos: 6

Shadow: The Martyr

Angst: 6 (7 in the boxcar)

Thorns: Tainted Touch

Shadow Passions: Promote evil (Anger) 3


Image: Once a beautiful young girl with long, curly, dark hair and big brown eyes, her hair is now ratty and tangled and her eyes are dark and puffy. Marie wears a torn, stained, flowered dress and a black sandal on one foot. She did not have time to find the other.

Roleplaying Notes: You are so deep in self-remorse that you do not care about anyone or anything. You ignore most of what goes on around you, and most others ignore you as well. If people bother you, you try to scare them away. It is possible that if the right person approached you in just the right way, you might snap out of your depression — but it hasn't happened yet.





Appendix: The Midnight Express



The Midnight Express is certainly one of the most unusual trains one could ever expect to see. The collage of different cars can be a somewhat jarring sight at first. Traveling through the interior of the train can be even more disconcerting, as the luxuriant Orient Express lounge car is hitched to a stark and barren boxcar that was used to haul concentration camp prisoners during World War II. The following are descriptions of some of the cars that can be found as a part of the Midnight Express; many more exist, but only a few have been described here, leaving the rest for the Storyteller to devise.

History

Certainly, there has been something like the Midnight Express since before the Industrial Age, however, little is known about those days past. There are other ghost trains that travel the rails of the Shadowlands as well, but only the Midnight Express circles the globe every night, not to mention offers the protection of the mysterious Ferrymen.

The Midnight Express came into being the night of August 10, 1887. On that night a train, overloaded with passengers, crashed into a deep culvert because the bridge that crossed it had been burnt out. Fires had been set that day to burn the dry grass around the tracks in an attempt to prevent just such an accident. Unfortunately, the fires were not completely extinguished, and they re-lit after the departure of the workers. The resulting flames spread to the bridge that spanned the small culvert. The first engine, No. 21, cleared the collapsing bridge, however, the second engine crashed headlong into the ground, followed by the next nine cars, which were reduced to kindling. Over 80 people were killed in the resulting crash, which was deemed to be one of the worst train wrecks in history. The fact that the engine and several of the cars were utterly destroyed allowed the train to be brought into the Shadowlands in the form of a relic. Some speculate that the crash was engineered by the Ferrymen, though this has been publicly denied.

J.W. Stillwell, the train's conductor, was immediately placed in charge of the train and has remained so ever since. Why the Ferrymen chose that particular train, and how they manage for it to travel through the

Tempest with such regularity and apparent ease is still unknown; as is the reason for its creation in the first place. Certainly, a lot of effort must go into maintaining the Midnight Express, not to mention ensuring its safe passage.

The Midnight Express began with that first train, but many cars have become a part of the train since then. Most cars that have joined the train have the dubious distinction of having been a part of some train disaster involving the death of its passengers. Many cars have joined the train since that first hot summer night, and several have been lost as well. Rumors persist of cars that began the journey, but somehow became separated from the train and were lost in the Tempest, though no one has been able to substantiate these rumors to date. The strongest and most persistent legend is that of the caboose, which supposedly plunges into the Oblivion every Halloween, taking all of its passengers with it. The caboose then reappears, attached to the train, unaffected but empty. Not all of the cars that join the Midnight Express are passenger cars; there are lounge cars, dining cars, luggage cars, and even freight and box cars, though most involved the deaths of mortals at the time of their destruction.

Each of the cars has its own idiosyncrasies and legends, such as that of the vanishing caboose. Some are haunted by Drones of those who died, while others show strong evidence of how that train met its demise. Various cars are favored by different factions of wraiths, though all are supposedly welcome. Several Hierarchy scouts are known to frequent the lounge car, which once was a part of the famed Orient Express, while some Heretic cults are said to have secret meetings in some of the boxcars.

Engine No. 13

Engine No. 13 was a typical locomotive of its time: 30 tons of metal racing down the tracks at speeds far too fast for its inadequate brakes. Most modern rail-safety measures had not yet been put into place at that time, and rail accidents were still commonplace. Engineer Edward McClintock was in charge the night of the accident. Before leaving that night, he had protested to conductor Stillwell that the two engines were not enough for the over-packed cars, that the cars should be split up. Stillwell disregarded his protests, and the train went on toward disaster. If Stillwell had heeded McClintock's warning, perhaps the tragedy could have been avoided. McClintock responded instantly when he heard the whistle signaling





him to man the brakes, but the attempt was futile. He was crushed beneath tons of metal when the train plummeted into the culvert.

Of all the cars in the train, only the engine appears pristine. The numeral "13" is brightly illuminated on the front of the train, and the headlight shines with an eerie brightness, illuminating the murky vapor of the Tempest. Inside the engine the normal sights and sounds of the interior of a steam engine may be found: the constant hiss of the boiler, the rattling of the wheels on the track, and the acrid smell of smoke mixed with oil. Engineer McClintock can also be found here, endlessly toiling away at running his beloved engine, and ensuring that it maintains its course through the Tempest. McClintock will politely ask any who enter the engine to leave, and will refuse to answer most questions. If he is attacked, Nicholas will almost certainly arrive in an attempt to aid him. The train itself is fueled with relic wood and coal, which is loaded on at the way station, at the same time that other goods are off-loaded.

Salon and Dining Car of the Orient Express

Though there are other salon and dining cars as a part of the Midnight Express, these are among the most well-known, for they were once a part of the Simplon-Orient Express. In actuality, three cars from this train have become a part of the Midnight Express: the salon car, the dining car, and a sleeping car. These three cars became a part of the Midnight Express after a loose rail tie on a bridge in Hungary caused the train to buckle, sending three of the trains car plummeting over 200 feet into the river below. The incident was hushed up and very little information about the crash leaked to the world media.

These 1920s-era cars are all finished in the distinctive blue with gold trim and have a luxuriously plush interior. Half of the dining car is devoted to food preparation: kitchen, pantry, dish-washing and storage. The other half is filled with dining booths: six seating four, six seating two. First- and second-class diners are served

jointly, though not always equally, by Emile and his staff of three waiters.

Both food and drink are available in the dining car, while drinks may be obtained in the salon; something most wraiths are unaccustomed to. The Ferrymen who run the train have discovered a method of combining the Usury and Inhabit Arcanos to actually create food that provides sustenance for wraiths. In order to do this, food or drink that is about to be destroyed is Inhabited, thereby allowing the wraith to manifest it in the Shadowlands. Usury is then used to invest the food with Pathos. The exact methods behind this are jealously guarded and much sought-after by many wraithlords. Though only a pale reflection of actual food, this amenity has made the train quite popular; there are wraiths who board the Midnight Express solely to experience the sensation of food and drink again. Menus are available in the dining car with prices ranging from 1/2 to three oboli for meals and roughly the same for wines. The wraith consuming such meals will generally regain one Pathos for each 1/2 oboli cost of the meal. Meals and drink containing the distilled Corpus of Thralls are available, but to only a select few, known well to Emile. These meals are by far closer to the real thing in both

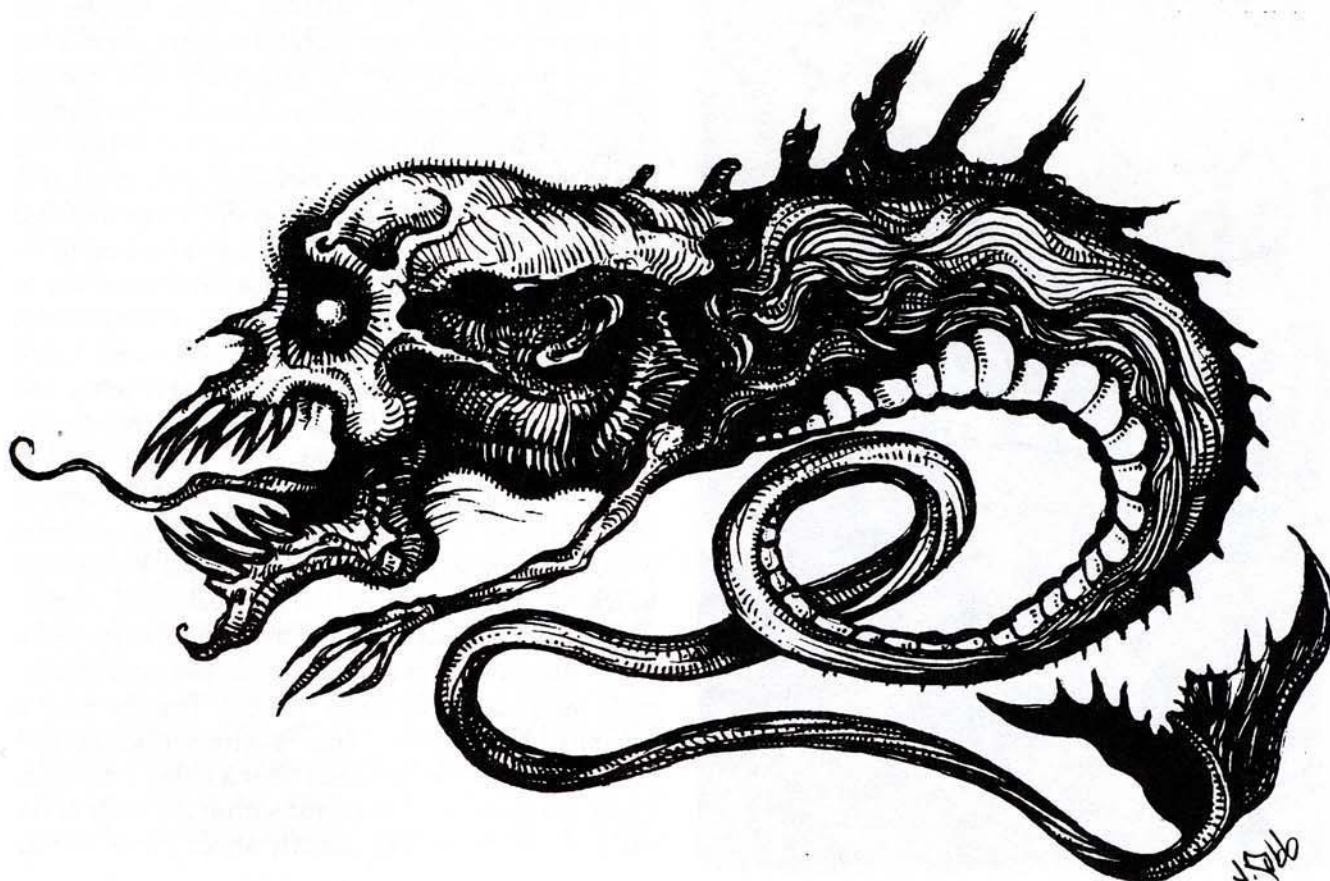
taste and texture; in fact, wraiths have been known to become intoxicated from wine made in this fashion.

These cars are usually dominated by members of the Hierarchy. Others are made to feel distinctly uncomfortable, although no overt action is made against them for fear of reprisal from the Ferrymen. The Midnight Express makes for the ideal meeting place for wraiths of both the Shadowlands and Stygia. Here, in the Tempest, both can stay for an unlimited duration, and many gather amidst the splendor of these cars to make their plans and to share information.

Both Pierre, the bartender; and Emile Bercé, the maitre d'hôtel can always be found in these cars. Pierre, the bartender in the Lounge car, always greets newcomers with a smile and is acknowledged as a great fount of gossip. However, one should take what one hears from Pierre with a grain of salt, as he is known for his wild tales and exaggerations. Emile, on the other hand, is the epitome of the stuffy French waiter.

The Boxcar

This rickety old boxcar was used during the 1940s to transport concentration camp prisoners to their des-





J.R. Cobb

tinations in Nazi Germany. The car was drafty and had no facilities for the unfortunate people, who were crammed into it like cattle. This particular car was filled with over 150 individuals, packed in as tightly as they could fit. Upon arrival at Dachau, it was not immediately unloaded, and instead sat for four days in the blistering summer sun. By the time the train was ready to be unloaded, the majority of its occupants were already dead. Rather than unloading the mass of bodies, the train was burned to the ground, burning the few survivors alive.

The interior of this car is cold and drafty, and the howling winds of the Tempest can be heard rattling the sides of the car. Entryways have been added at each end of the car so that passengers may travel through it to reach other cars. Upon entering this unlit car, a foul stench is immediately apparent, the stench of charred, decaying flesh and worse. In the silence, a faint whimpering can be heard coming from one corner of the car. Investigating the cause of the sound reveals a young woman, no more than 17, crouched in the corner of the car, apparently cradling something in her lap. If any attempt is made to communicate with her or if she is disturbed in any way, her flesh will begin to wither and crack as if consumed by invisible flames, and she will begin to scream in a most frightful manner, yet still she will not move, or release the invisible bundle that she holds. This is the wraith of young Marie, whose infant child died during the tortuous journey to Dachau. She was so overcome by grief at the death of her child, that she held him close to her even as the flames engulfed the train. After her death, Marie saw no reason to remain in the mortal world and chose instead to stay in the car where she and her family had met their deaths. Over the years, she has come to be little more than a Drone and will not react in any way other than the one described above. Most of the train's workers consider her to be completely mindless.

Several of the darker Heretic cults hold regular meetings here. There is always the sense of an ominous presence, almost as if some malevolent being were watching over the place. It is this feeling of despondency which appeals to some of the darker Heretic cults. If the true reason for this feeling of despair were known, most would certainly avoid this car. The car itself is Inhabited by a Spectre. This Spectre was forced into this position by the Ferryman after a failed attempt to hijack the train. It is contained within the walls of the car and can in no way directly affect those within,

though it can play subtle mental tricks on its occupants, mostly in the form of its effect on a wraith's Shadow. The temporary Angst rating of all wraiths in the car is raised by one while they remain in this car, and the Shadow's difficulty to perform any action is reduced by two. While a character is present in this car, the character's Shadow will have a much stronger presence and will whisper to her continually. This can make it quite dangerous for any characters with high Angst ratings to loiter here for a prolonged period of time.

Circus Car

In the summer of 1956, a circus train was en route from New York to Baltimore, where its next performance was scheduled. The train was held up in New Jersey, and was trying to make up for lost time so as to arrive in Baltimore in time to set up for its performance the next morning. As the train entered the Pennsylvania mountains, it encountered a strong thunderstorm. The conductor should have ordered the engineer to slow the train, especially since warnings of flash floods had come in over the radio. If the train had been going slower, then perhaps there would have been time to slow it down when the engineer sighted the washed-out bridge ahead. Unfortunately, the bad weather had brought visibility to a minimum, and he was only just able to apply the brakes as the train crashed into the overrun gorge. Fortunately, only the first three cars were lost, along with the engine, and two of these had been baggage cars. The third car, which housed the circus' clowns, was instantly submerged, drowning all aboard.

From the outside, the car appears exactly as it did when it was in service. However, upon entering the car, the cause of the car's destruction becomes quite evident. Every surface of the car is perpetually damp, the wood of the interior swelled with water. The car is divided into several sleeping compartments, all of which are fairly unusable, as they are water-logged. One of the clowns, called Bubbles, who died when the train crashed, remains with the car. Though he rarely leaves the circus car, Bubbles is well-known by regular travelers on the train. Perhaps better known are his pranks, which he plays ruthlessly on those who pass through his car, and sometimes on individuals unfortunate enough to attract his attention. Though Bubbles is not a Drone, he will only rarely interact with others — with the exception of his pranks, of course. Most consider him to be insane, a mindless lunatic, though others feel





that he must serve some purpose, or the Ferryman would not allow him to remain.


Second-Class Coach

This car is 35 feet long and eight feet wide. Its interior is unpainted, devoid of any decoration. A narrow aisle runs between hard wooden benches. When the small windows are shuttered (and they should be in the Tempest, as they lack panes), only a dozen oil lamps provide light. On the other side of the Shroud, this relic once transported Union troops to and from the field during the American Civil War. Then in 1862, Confederate saboteurs laid a cross-tie on the tracks, causing the troop train to derail. The splintered wreckage was subsequently burned. Though the car was empty at the time, the nervous sweat and disenchanted blood of young soldiers was enough to shift it through the Shroud. In the Shadowlands, this car seems almost empty. Two Legionnaires complain of their transferal between Citadels. A likely Renegade tries to sleep. In the corner, a Heretic preaches to no one in particular. Once the train plunges into the Tempest, the car no longer seems quite so empty. In the dimmed light, a wraith can detect dozens of faded forms; when the lamps gutter, these Drones grow more distinct. They represent all of the young Americans who went eagerly, ignorantly off to war. Union grays and Confederates blues sit next to khaki, camouflage, and olive drab. American Revolutionaries are absent because railroads and the United States had yet to be invented.

Club Car

This car was part of the Mexican Train Disaster of 1972, in which 147 passengers died and another 700 were injured. The tragedy provoked public outrage, at home and abroad, at the rail company's negligence.

The car is eight feet wide and 70 feet long. The space is divided into a small kitchen, a 40-foot bar with a dozen stools, eight dining booths (four with four seats, four with two seats) and a washroom. Most patrons are from the coach and second-class sleeper. The staff includes a cook and bartender. The cook can whip up a variety of spicy snacks. Each serving costs $\frac{1}{4}$ ob. Since this car stores limited food, those who order more than one serving are directed to the dining car. What the car does store in abundance, however, is drink — from coffee to tequila. Servings also cost $\frac{1}{4}$ ob each. This is



not mundane nourishment. The food is processed Corpus, the drink distilled Pathos. A wraith may digest this fact after hearing whispered words in her fizzing soda. (Roll Perception + Awareness against difficulty 4 to notice). Food provides one point of Corpus per serving; drink, a like amount of Pathos.

Second-Class Sleeper

In 1958, a landslide in the southern Urals buried this car beneath tons of rock. Those passengers who survived the initial wreck huddled in darkness for eternal hours before suffocating. Claustrophobia and slow death have left an indelible stain on this relic.

This 70-foot-long car is divided into a shower, male and female washrooms, and 16 sleeping compartments. Each compartment contains two seats, a sink, and a mirror. The seats fold out into a bed; a second "couchette" pulls down from the ceiling.

Second-Class Lounge

This car was destroyed in a head-on collision in Scotland, 1918. The most frustrating aspect about this wreck was that it could have been avoided. The train's conductor simply forgot to get his orders from the telegraph office — orders that directed his train to pull onto a siding while an unscheduled train passed. The dispatcher was aware of the pending collision with time to spare, but had no way of warning either train. He could only pray for a miracle that wasn't going to happen.

Padded benches, seats, and end tables line the 40-foot-long walls, leaving some space down the center. A thin rug covers the wooden floor, and plain curtains frame the windows. A sturdy card-table is bolted to the floor at one end of the car, surrounded by chairs. One wraith reads a relic-book (Stephen King's *The Waste-land*) by gas-light, probably for the hundredth time. A woman watches over her two adopted children.

Pullman Parlor Car

On board the Pullman parlor car, christened the "Victoria," the characters relax in luxurious settings. In its day, the car was a thing of beauty, a "palace on wheels." In the large windows hung lace panels topped with tasseled valances that gazed out onto the passing scenery. Gilt-edged mirrors were mounted on the wall-papered walls, adding a sense of spaciousness. Ornate

carpeting covered the floor, and electric lamps were hung on brass tubing in the domed ceiling. Velvet-upholstered armchairs faced each other on either side of the aisle, with ottomans at their feet. At the rear of the car there is a smoking room, which is separated from the rest of the car. The car glowed with the elegance and luxury of turn-of-the-century style. The "Victoria" became part of the Midnight Express after industrial sabotage related to the Pullman strike of 1894 resulted in a fatal jackknife (for more details, see **Scott Frances**, Chapter One.)

Now that it has become a part of the Midnight Express, the pall of death and decay hangs in the car. The windows face out onto the roiling darkness of the Tempest. While the windows are still capable of being opened, it is the rare passenger who is foolish enough to do this. The mirrors no longer give the illusion of space; instead, they reflect the wraiths' images back at them, making them constantly aware of their state. (Shadows with the Trick of the Light Thorn should be quick to take advantage of this.) The light from the lamps seems pale and dirty. The lush and ornate features of the car seem oppressively decadent, and the armchairs and ottomans make the car seem small and cramped. In describing the car to the players, try to invoke every negative association with the early Industrial and Victorian period.


First-Class Sleeper

Toledo. April 11, 1993. Basque bombing kills General Fernando Vegas and two aides. Thirteen others injured. The 20 kilograms of explosives were set beneath the general's personal sleeper car, police say. A Basque separatist group known as ETA takes responsibility for the blast.

This 70-foot-long car contains two washrooms (one with a shower), an unstocked kitchenette, and ten sleeping compartments. Each compartment boasts three seats, which fold out into a bed, another bed recessed into the wall, luggage racks, a mirror, sink, and fold-out table. The floor is carpeted and the walls wood-paneled. By removing a partition between two rooms, it is possible to make one larger room.

Caboose

In 1893, this red caboose jumped the tracks on a downgrade in western Canada. Miraculously, the crewmen inside survived, but the car itself was a total wreck.



Also known as a "crummy," the caboose is usually home to the train's crew. A row of lockers, a stove, a table, and a desk complete the furnishings. The interior is painted green. Looking out the rear windows, one sees the tracks unwinding behind like twin fishing lines into an oily pond.

Train Defenses

To date, there has yet to be a successful attack on the Midnight Express, and only the greatest of Maelstroms affect it in any way. While traveling through the Tempest, the train moves at incredible speeds, far too fast for any wraith or Spectre to keep up with. If the train could be caught, then entry would not be so difficult, either through a window into one of the passenger cars, or through the doors that connect some of the older cars. Though the train apparently has no real exterior defenses, it does have one thing which strikes

fear into any who consider boarding it: a Ferryman. Though this enigmatic individual rarely shows himself, his presence pervades the entire train. He is aware of all things that take place aboard the train and can appear almost immediately in any part of the train when he senses a disturbance. However, he is only one individual, so many others have been hired to serve as guards to prevent a hijacking and to squelch troublemakers. There are at least a dozen of these guards on board the Midnight Express at any given time, and like their master, Nicholas, they can arrive at any desired location on the train in mere moments. Usually, a few of them wander the train looking for signs of trouble, while the rest relax but remain at readiness in one of the sleeper cars somewhere near the center of the train. In addition to the guards and the Ferryman, the other regular crew members will fight in defense of the train, or in their own defense, if necessary.



Wraith Errata

Credits Page:

Written by: Jackie Cassada

Design and Development Contributors: Ray
Winner

pg. 10:

The following words are covered up by an initial
cap:

“Just as a soul...”

pg. 38:

The shadow trade is discussed more extensively on
add: pg. 59.

pg. 46

(see pg. 51)

pg. 97

the following things are missing from the example
character sheet:

Keep writing (2)

Ruin publisher (2) [needs one more dot]

p. 149-150

between the bottom of the page and the top of the
following page, the following text is missing:

the subject's future or past. The Storyteller should
never respond with a direct answer, but instead in a
cryptic

pg. 161, Outrage

(see pg. XX) = (see pg. 212)

pg. 163, Pandemonium

Fog Chart on pg. XX = Fog Chart on pg. 205

pg. 171, Usury

(see Healing, pg. XX) = (see Healing, pg. 198)

Note: The only way that a wraith can soak
aggravated damage is through the Moliarte art
“Martialry”.

Relics and Artifacts

In addition, the example character has the back-
ground of Relics, which was cut. We didn't think it
was exactly fair to make characters pay background
points for pocket lint, pens and other things that they
would have had on them at the time of death. This
may include weapons, if appropriate to the character,
but remember that any complex machinery requires
Pathos to use, and that a relic gun is of no use without
relic bullets! A relic sword, on the other hand, will func-
tion as normal. In general, anything which requires
power of some sort (i.e.: electricity) or which involves a
chemical reaction (i.e.: gunpowder) will not function
as a relic without an investment of Pathos. There are
said to be weapons and machines which do not require
Pathos to function; by definition, these objects would
be Artifacts. See the description for “Artifact” (pg. 131)
for more information.

Malkavians and Wraiths

If the nature of a Malkavian's madness is such that
he would be able to see wraiths if he were human, then
he is able to see them. On the other hand, a Malkavian
who thinks that he is Dan Quayle, or who is a compul-
sive shopper would not be able to see wraiths.

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